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ADRIENNE AND DJALMA.

THE

WANDERING JEW.

By EUGENE SUE,

Author of "The Mysteries of Paris," etc., etc.

COMPLETE IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOLUME II.

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THE WANDERING JEW.

VOLUME II.

CHAPTER XXVI.

A GOOD GENIUS.

THE first of the two, whose arrival had interrupted the answer of the notary, was Faringhea. At sight of this man's forbidding countenance, Samuel approached, and said to him: "Who are you, sir?"

After casting a piercing glance at Rodin, who started but soon recovered his habitual coolness, Faringhea replied to Samuel: "Prince Djalma arrived lately from India, in order to be present here this day, as it was recommended to him by an inscription on a medal, which he wore about his neck."

"He, also!" cried Gabriel, who had been the shipmate of the Indian Prince from the Azores, where the vessel in which he came from Alexandria had been driven into port: "he also one of the heirs! In fact, the prince told me during the voyage that his mother was of French origin. But, doubtless, he thought it right to conceal from me the object of his journey. Oh! that Indian is a noble and courageous young man. Where is he?"

The Strangler again looked at Rodin, and said, laying strong emphasis upon his words: "I left the prince yesterday evening. He informed me that, although he had a great interest to be here, he might possibly sacrifice that interest to other motives. I passed the night in the same hotel, and this morning, when I went to call on him, they told me he was already gone out. My friendship for him led me to come hither, hoping the information I should be able to give might be of use to the prince."

In making no mention of the snare into which he had

fallen the day before, in concealing Rodin's machinations with regard to Djalma, and in attributing the absence of this latter to a voluntary cause, the Strangler evidently wished to serve the socius, trusting that Rodin would know how to recompense his discretion. It is useless to observe, that all this story was impudently false. Having succeeded that morning in escaping from his prison by a prodigious effort of cunning, audacity, and skill, he had run to the hotel where he had left Djalma; there he had learned that a man and woman, of an advanced age, and most respectable appearance, calling themselves relations of the young Indian, had asked to see him—and that, alarmed at the dangerous state of somnolency in which he seemed to be plunged, they had taken him home in their carriage, in order to pay him the necessary attention.

"It is unfortunate," said the notary, "that this heir also did not make his appearance—but he has, unhappily, forfeited his right to the immense inheritance that is in question."

"Oh! an immense inheritance is in question," said Faringhea, looking fixedly at Rodin, who prudently turned away his eyes.

The second of the two personages we have mentioned entered at this moment. It was the father of Marshal Simon, an old man of tall stature, still active and vigorous for his age. His hair was white and thin. His countenance, rather fresh-colored, was expressive at once of quickness, mildness and energy.

Agricola advanced hastily to meet him. "You here, M. Simon!" he exclaimed.

"Yes, my boy," said the marshal's father, cordially pressing Agricola's hand, "I have just arrived from my journey. M. Hardy was to have been here, about some matter of inheritance, as he supposed; but, as he will still be absent from Paris for some time, he has charged me——"

"He also an heir!—M. Francis Hardy!" cried Agricola, interrupting the old workman.

"But how pale and agitated you are, my boy!" said the marshal's father, looking round with astonishment. "What is the matter?"

"What is the matter?" cried Dagobert, in despair, as he approached the foreman. "The matter is that they would rob your granddaughters, and that I have brought them from the depths of Siberia only to witness this shameful deed!"

"Eh?" cried the old workman, trying to recognize the soldier's face, "you are then——"

"Dagobert."

"You—the generous, devoted friend of my son!" cried the marshal's father, pressing the hands of Dagobert in his own with strong emotion; "but did you not speak of Simon's daughter?"

"Of his daughters; for he is more fortunate than he imagines," said Dagobert. "The poor children are twins."

"And where are they?" asked the old man.

"In a convent."

"In a convent?"

"Yes; by the treachery of this man, who keeps them there in order to disinherit them."

"What man?"

"The Marquis d'Aigrigny."

"My son's mortal enemy!" cried the old workman, as he threw a glance of aversion at Father d'Aigrigny, whose audacity did not fail him.

"And that is not all," added Agricola. "M. Hardy, my worthy and excellent master, has also lost his right to this immense inheritance."

"What?" cried Marshal Simon's father; "but M. Hardy did not know that such important interests were concerned. He set out hastily to join one of his friends who was in want of him."

At each of these successive revelations, Samuel felt his trouble increase: but he could only sigh over it, for the will of the testator was couched, unhappily, in precise and positive terms.

Father d'Aigrigny, impatient to end this scene, which caused him cruel embarrassment, in spite of his apparent calmness, said to the notary, in a grave and expressive voice: "It is necessary, sir, that all this should have an end. If calumny could reach me, I would answer victoriously by the facts that have just come to light. Why attribute to odious conspiracies the absence of the heirs, in whose names this soldier and his son have so uncourteously urged their demands? Why should such absence be less explicable than the young Indian's, or than M. Hardy's, who, as his confidential man has just told us, did not even know the importance of the interests that called him hither? Is it not probable, that the daughters of Marshal Simon, and Mdlle. de Cardoville have been prevented from coming here to-day by some very natural reasons? But, once again, this has

lasted too long. I think M. Notary will agree with me, that this discovery of new heirs does not at all affect the question, which I had the honor to propose to him just now; namely—whether, as trustee for the poor, to whom Abbé Gabriel made a free gift of all he possessed, I remain notwithstanding his tardy and illegal opposition, the only possessor of this property, which I have promised, and which I now again promise, in presence of all here assembled, to employ for the Greater Glory of the Lord? Please to answer me plainly, M. Notary; and thus terminate the scene which must needs be painful to us all."

"Sir," replied the notary, in a solemn tone, "on my soul and conscience, and in the name of law and justice—as a faithful and impartial executor of the last will of M. Marius de Rennepont, I declare that, by virtue of the deed of gift of Abbé Gabriel de Rennepont, you, M. l'Abbé d' Aigrigny, are the only possessor of this property, which I place at your immediate disposal, that you may employ the same according to the intention of the donor."

These words, pronounced with conviction and gravity, destroyed the last vague hopes that the representatives of the heirs might till then have entertained. Samuel became paler than usual, and pressed convulsively the hand of Bathsheba, who had drawn near to him. Large tears rolled down the cheeks of the two old people. Dagobert and Agricola were plunged into the deepest dejection. Struck with the reasoning of the notary, who refused to give more credence and authority to their remonstrances than the magistrates had done before him, they saw themselves forced to abandon every hope. But Gabriel suffered more than any one; he felt the most terrible remorse, in reflecting that, by his blindness, he had been the involuntary cause and instrument of this abominable theft.

So, when the notary, after having examined and verified the amount of securities contained in the cedar box, said to Father d'Aigrigny: "Take possession, sir, of this casket——" Gabriel exclaimed, with bitter disappointment and profound despair: "Alas! one would fancy, under these circumstances, that an inexorable fatality pursues all those who are worthy of interest, affection or respect. Oh, my God!" added the young priest, clasping his hands with fervor, "Thy sovereign justice will never permit the triumph of such iniquity."

It was as if heaven had listened to the prayer of the mis-

sionary. Hardly had he spoken, when a strange event took place.

Without waiting for the end of Gabriel's invocation, Rodin, profiting by the decision of the notary, had seized the casket in his arms, unable to repress a deep aspiration of joy and triumph. At the very moment when Father d'Aigrigny and his socius thought themselves at last in safe possession of the treasure, the door of the apartment in which the clock had been heard striking was suddenly opened.

A woman appeared upon the threshold.

At sight of her, Gabriel uttered a loud cry, and remained as if thunderstruck. Samuel and Bathsheba fell on their knees together, and raised their clasped hands. The Jew and Jewess felt inexplicable hopes reviving within them.

All the other actors in this scene appeared struck with stupor. Rodin—Rodin himself—recoiled two steps, and replaced the casket on the table with a trembling hand. Though the incident might appear natural enough—a woman appearing on the threshold of a door, which she had just thrown open—there was a pause of deep and solemn silence. Every bosom seemed oppressed, and as if struggling for breath. All experienced, at sight of this woman, surprise mingled with fear, and indefinable anxiety—for this woman was the living original of the portrait, which had been placed in the room a hundred and fifty years ago. The same head-dress, the same flowing robe, the same countenance, so full of poignant and resigned grief! She advanced slowly, and without appearing to perceive the deep impression she had caused. She approached one of the pieces of furniture, inlaid with brass, touched a spring concealed in the moulding of gilded bronze, so that an upper drawer flew open, and taking from it a sealed parchment envelope, she walked up to the table, and placed this packet before the notary, who, hitherto silent and motionless, received it mechanically from her.

Then, casting upon Gabriel, who seemed fascinated by her presence, a long, mild, melancholy look, this woman directed her steps towards the hall, the door of which had remained open. As she passed near Samuel and Bathsheba, who were still kneeling, she stopped an instant, bowed her fair head towards them, and looked at them with tender solicitude. Then, giving them her hands to kiss, she glided away as slowly as she had entered—throwing a last glance upon Gabriel. The departure of this woman seemed to break the spell under which all present had remained for the last few

minutes. Gabriel was the first to speak, exclaiming, in an agitated voice. "It is she—again—here—in this house!"

"Who, brother?" said Agricola, uneasy at the pale and almost wild looks of the missionary; for the smith had not yet remarked the strange resemblance of the woman to the portrait, though he shared in the general feeling of amazement, without being able to explain it to himself. Dagobert and Faringhea were in a similar state of mind.

"Who is this woman?" resumed Agricola, as he took the hand of Gabriel, which felt damp and icy cold.

"Look!" said the young priest. "Those portraits have been there for more than a century and a half."

He pointed to the paintings, before which he was now seated, and Agricola, Dagobert, and Faringhea raised their eyes to either side of the fireplace. Three exclamations were now heard at once.

"It is she—it is the same woman!" cried the smith, in amazement, "and her portrait has been here for a hundred and fifty years!"

"What do I see?" cried Dagobert, as he gazed at the portrait of the man. "The friend and emissary of Marshal Simon. Yes! it is the same face that I saw last year in Siberia. Oh, yes! I recognize that wild and sorrowful air—those black eyebrows, which make only one!"

"My eyes do not deceive me," muttered Faringhea to himself, shuddering with horror. "It is the same man, with the black mark on his forehead, that we strangled and buried on the banks of the Ganges—the same man, that one of the sons of Bowanee told me, in the ruins of Tchandi, had been met by him afterwards at one of the gates of Bombay—the man of the fatal curse, who scatters death upon his passage—and his picture has existed for a hundred and fifty years!"

And, like Dagobert and Agricola, the stranger could not withdraw his eyes from that strange portrait.

"What a mysterious resemblance!" thought Father d'Aigrigny. Then, as if struck with a sudden idea, he said to Gabriel: "But this woman is the same that saved your life in America?"

"It is the same," answered Gabriel, with emotion; "and yet she told me she was going towards the North," added the young priest, speaking to himself.

"But how came she in this house?" said Father d'Aigrigny, addressing Samuel. "Answer me! did this woman come in with you, or before you?"

"I came in first, and alone, when this door was first opened since a century and a half," said Samuel, gravely.

"Then how can you explain the presence of this woman here?" said Father d'Aigrigny.

"I do not try to explain it," said the Jew. "I see, I believe, and now I hope," added he, looking at Bathsheba with an indefinable expression.

"But you ought to explain the presence of this woman!" said Father d'Aigrigny, with vague uneasiness. "Who is she? How came she hither?"

"All I know is, sir, that my father has often told me, there are subterraneous communications between this house and distant parts of the quarter."

"Oh! then nothing can be clearer," said Father d'Aigrigny; "it only remains to be known what this woman intends by coming hither. As for her singular resemblance to this portrait, it is one of the freaks of nature."

Rodin had shared in the general emotion, at the apparition of this mysterious woman. But when he saw that she had delivered a sealed packet to the notary, the socius, instead of thinking of the strangeness of this unexpected vision, was only occupied with a violent desire to quit the house with the treasure which had just fallen to the Company. He felt a vague anxiety at sight of the envelope with the black seal, which the protectress of Gabriel had delivered to the notary, and was still held mechanically in his hands. The socius, therefore, judging this a very good opportunity to walk off with the casket, during the general silence and stupor which still continued, slightly touched Father d'Aigrigny's elbow, made him a sign of intelligence, and, tucking the cedar-wood chest under his arm, was hastening towards the door.

"One moment, sir," said Samuel, rising, and standing in his path; "I request M. Notary to examine the envelope, that has just been delivered to him. You may then go out."

"But, sir," said Rodin, trying to force a passage, "the question is definitively decided in favor of Father d'Aigrigny. Therefore, with your permission——"

"I tell you, sir," answered the old man, in a loud voice: "that this casket *shall* not leave the house, until M. Notary has examined the envelope just delivered to him!"

These words drew the attention of all. Rodin was forced to retrace his steps. Notwithstanding the firmness of his character, the Jew shuddered at the look of implacable hate which Rodin turned upon him at this moment.

Yielding to the wish of Samuel, the notary examined the envelope with attention. "Good Heaven!" he cried suddenly; "what do I see?—Ah! so much the better!"

At this exclamation, all eyes turned upon the notary. "Oh! read, read, sir!" cried Samuel, clasping his hands together. "My presentiments have not then deceived me!"

"But, sir," said Father d'Aigrigny to the notary, for he began to share in the anxiety of Rodin, "what is this paper?"

"A codicil," answered the notary; "a codicil, which reopens the whole question."

"How, sir?" cried Father d'Aigrigny, in a fury, as he hastily drew nearer to the notary, "reopens the whole question! By what right?"

"It is impossible," added Rodin. "We protest against it."

"Gabriel! father! listen," cried Agricola, "all is not lost. There is yet hope. Do you hear, Gabriel? There is yet hope."

"What do you say?" exclaimed the young priest, rising, and hardly believing the words of his adopted brother.

"Gentlemen," said the notary; "I will read to you the superscription of this envelope. It changes, or rather, it adjourns, the whole of the testamentary provisions."

"Gabriel!" cried Agricola, throwing himself on the neck of the missionary, "all is adjourned, nothing is lost!"

"Listen, gentlemen," said the notary; and he read as follows:

"'This is a Codicil, which for reasons herein stated, adjourns and prorogues to the 1st day of June, 1832, though without any other change, all the provisions contained in the testament made by me, at one o'clock this afternoon. The house shall be reclosed, and the funds left in the hands of the same trustee, to be distributed to the rightful claimants on the 1st of June, 1832.

"'Villetaneuse, this 13th of February, 1682, eleven o'clock at night.

"'MARIUS DE RENNEPONT.'"

"I protest against this codicil as a forgery!" cried Father d'Aigrigny livid with rage and despair.

"The woman who delivered it to the notary is a suspicious character," added Rodin. "The codicil has been forged."

"No, sir," said the notary, severely; "I have just compared the two signatures, and they are absolutely alike. For the rest—what I said this morning, with regard to the absent heirs, is now applicable to you—the law is open;

you may dispute the authenticity of this codicil. Meanwhile, everything will remain suspended—since the term for the adjustment of the inheritance is prolonged for three months and a half."

When the notary had uttered these last words, Rodin's nails dripped blood; for the first time, his wan lips became red.

"Oh, God! Thou hast heard and granted my prayer!" cried Gabriel, kneeling down with religious fervor, and turning his angelic face towards heaven. "Thy sovereign justice has not let iniquity triumph!"

"What do you say, my brave boy?" cried Dagobert, who, in the first tumult of joy, had not exactly understood the meaning of the codicil.

"All is put off, father!" exclaimed the smith; "the heirs will have three months and a half more to make their claim. And now that these people are unmasked," added Agricola, pointing to Rodin and Father d'Aigrigny, "we have nothing more to fear from them. We shall be on our guard; and the orphans, Mdlle. de Cardoville, my worthy master, M. Hardy, and this young Indian, will all recover their own."

* * * * * * *

We must renounce the attempt to paint the delight, the transport of Gabriel and Agricola, of Dagobert, and Marshal Simon's father, of Samuel and Bathsheba. Faringhea alone remained in gloomy silence, before the portrait of the man with the black-barred forehead. As for the fury of Father d'Aigrigny and Rodin, when they saw Samuel retake possession of the casket, we must also renounce any attempt to describe it. On the notary's suggestion, who took with him the codicil, to have it opened according to the formalities of the law, Samuel agreed that it would be more prudent to deposit in the Bank of France the securities of immense value that were now known to be in his possession.

While all the generous hearts, which had for a moment suffered so much, were overflowing with happiness, hope, and joy, Father d'Aigrigny and Rodin quitted the house with rage and death in their souls. The reverend father got into his carriage, and said to his servants: "To Saint-Dizier House!"—Then, worn out and crushed, he fell back upon the seat, and hid his face in his hands, while he uttered a deep groan. Rodin sat next to him, and looked with a mixture of anger and disdain at this so dejected and broken-spirited man.

"The coward!" said he to himself. "He despairs—and yet——"

* * * * * * *

A quarter of an hour later, the carriage stopped in the Rue de Babylone, in the court-yard of Saint-Dizier House.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE FIRST LAST, AND THE LAST FIRST.

The carriage had travelled rapidly to Saint-Dizier House. During all the way, Rodin remained mute, contenting himself with observing Father d'Aigrigny, and listening to him, as he poured forth his grief and fury in a long monologue, interrupted by exclamations, lamentations, and bursts of rage, directed against the strokes of that inexorable destiny, which had ruined in a moment the best founded hopes. When the carriage entered the courtyard, and stopped before the portico, the princess's face could be seen through one of the windows, half hidden by the folds of a curtain; in her burning anxiety, she came to see if it was really Father d'Aigrigny who arrived at the house. Still more, in defiance of all ordinary rules, this great lady, generally so scrupulous as to appearances, hurried from her apartment, and descended several steps of the staircase, to meet Father d'Aigrigny, who was coming up with a dejected air. At sight of the livid and agitated countenance of the reverend father, the princess stopped suddenly, and grew pale. She suspected that all was lost. A look rapidly exchanged with her old lover left her no doubt of the issue she so much feared. Rodin humbly followed the reverend father, and both, preceded by the princess, entered the room. The door once closed, the princess, addressing Father d'Aigrigny, exclaimed with unspeakable anguish: "What has happened?"

Instead of answering this question, the reverend father, his eyes sparkling with rage, his lips white, his features contracted, looked fixedly at the princess, and said to her: "Do you know the amount of this inheritance, that we estimated at forty millions?"

"I understand," cried the princess; "we have been deceived. The inheritance amounts to nothing, and all you have done has been in vain."

"Yes, it has indeed been in vain," answered the reverend father, grinding his teeth with rage; "it was no question of forty millions, but of two hundred and twelve millions."

"Two hundred and twelve millions!" repeated the princess in amazement, as she drew back a step. "It is impossible!"

"I tell you I saw the vouchers, which were examined by the notary.

"Two hundred and twelve millions?" resumed the princess, with deep dejection. "It is an immense and sovereign power—and you have renounced—you have not struggled for it, by every possible means, and till the last moment?"

"Madame, I have done all that I could!—notwithstanding the treachery of Gabriel, who this very morning declared that he renounced us, and separated from the Society."

"Ungrateful!" said the princess, unaffectedly.

"The deed of gift, which I had the precaution to have prepared by the notary, was in such good, legal form, that in spite of the objections of that accursed soldier and his son, the notary had put me in possession of the treasure."

"Two hundred and twelve millions!" repeated the princess, clasping her hands. "Verily it is like a dream!"

"Yes," replied Father d'Aigrigny, bitterly, "for us, this possession is indeed a dream, for a codicil has been discovered, which puts off for three months and a half all the testamentary provisions. Now that our very precautions have roused the suspicion of all these heirs—now that they know the enormous amount at stake—they will be upon their guard; and all is lost."

"But who is the wretch that produced this codicil?"

"A woman."

"What woman?"

"Some wandering creature, that Gabriel says he met in America, where she saved his life."

"And how could this woman be there—how could she know the existence of this codicil?"

"I think it was all arranged with a miserable Jew, the guardian of the house, whose family has had charge of the funds for three generations; he had no doubt some secret instructions, in case he suspected the detention of any of the heirs, for this Marius de Rennepont had foreseen that our Company would keep their eyes upon his race."

"But can you not dispute the validity of this codicil?"

"What, go to law in these times—litigate about a will—incur the certainty of a thousand clamors, with no security

for success?—It is bad enough, that even this should get wind. Alas! it is terrible. So near the goal! after so much care and trouble. An affair that had been followed up with so much perseverance during a century and a half!"

"Two hundred and twelve millions!" said the princess. "The Order would have had no need to look for establishments in foreign countries; with such resources, it would have been able to impose itself upon France."

"Yes," resumed Father d'Aigrigny, with bitterness; "by means of education, we might have possessed ourselves of the rising generation. The power is altogether incalculable." Then, stamping with his foot, he resumed: "I tell you, that it is enough to drive one mad with rage! an affair so wisely, ably, patiently conducted!"

"Is there no hope?"

"Only that Gabriel may not revoke his donation, in as far as concerns himself. That alone would be a considerable sum—not less than thirty millions."

"It is enormous—it is almost what you hoped," said the princess; "then why despair?"

"Because it is evident that Gabriel will dispute this donation. However legal it may be, he will find means to annul it, now that he is free, informed as to our designs, and surrounded by his adopted family. I tell you, that all is lost. There is no hope left. I think it will be even prudent to write to Rome, to obtain permission to leave Paris for a while. This town is odious to me!"

"Oh, yes! I see that no hope is left—since you, my friend, have decided almost to fly."

Father d'Aigrigny was completely discouraged and broken down; this terrible blow had destroyed all life and energy within him. He threw himself back in an arm-chair, quite overcome. During the preceding dialogue, Rodin was standing humbly near the door, with his old hat in his hand. Two or three times, at certain passages in the conversation between Father d'Aigrigny and the princess, the cadaverous face of the socius, whose wrath appeared to be concentrated, was slightly flushed, and his flappy eyelids were tinged with red, as if the blood mounted in consequence of an interior struggle; but, immediately after, his dull countenance resumed its pallid hue.

"I must write instantly to Rome, to announce this defeat, which has become an event of the first importance, because it overthrows immense hopes," said Father d'Aigrigny, much depressed.

The reverend father had remained seated; pointing to a table, he said to Rodin, with an abrupt and haughty air: "Write!"

The socius placed his hat on the ground, answered with a respectful bow the command, and with stooping head and slanting walk, went to seat himself on a chair, that stood before a desk. Then, taking pen and paper, he waited, silent and motionless, for the dictation of his superior.

"With your permission, princess?" said Father d'Aigrigny to Madame de Saint-Dizier. The latter answered by an impatient wave of the hand, as if she reproached him for the formal demand at such a time. The reverend father bowed, and dictated these words in a hoarse and hollow voice: "All our hopes, which of late had become almost certainties, have been suddenly defeated. The affair of the Rennepont inheritance, in spite of all the care and skill employed upon it, has completely and finally failed. At the point to which matters had been brought, it is unfortunately worse than a failure; it is a most disastrous event for the Society, which was clearly entitled to this property, fraudulently withdrawn from a confiscation made in our favor. My conscience at least bears witness, that, to the last moment, I did all that was possible to defend and secure our rights. But I repeat, we must consider this important affair as lost absolutely and forever, and think no more about it."

Thus dictating, Father d'Aigrigny's back was turned towards Rodin. At a sudden movement made by the socius, in rising and throwing his pen upon the table, instead of continuing to write, the reverend father turned round, and, looking at Rodin with profound astonishment, said to him: "Well! what are you doing?"

"It is time to end this—the man is mad!" said Rodin to himself, as he advanced slowly towards the fireplace.

"What! you quit your place—you cease writing?" said the reverend father, in amazement. Then, addressing the princess, who shared in his astonishment, he added, as he glanced contemptuously at the socius: "He is losing his senses."

"Forgive him," replied Mme. de Saint-Dizier; "it is, no doubt, the emotion caused by the ruin of this affair."

"Thank the princess, return to your place, and continue to write," said Father d'Aigrigny to Rodin, in a tone of disdainful compassion, as, with imperious finger, he pointed to the table.

The socius, perfectly indifferent to this new order, ap-

proached the fireplace, drew himself up to his full height as he turned his arched back, planted himself firmly on his legs, stamped on the carpet with the heel of his clumsy, greasy shoes, crossed his hands beneath the flaps of his old, spotted coat, and, lifting his head, looked fixedly at Father d'Aigrigny. The socius had not spoken a word, but his hideous countenance, now flushed, suddenly revealed such a sense of his superiority, and such sovereign contempt for Father d'Aigrigny, mingled with so calm and serene a daring, that the reverend father and the princess were quite confounded by it. They felt themselves overawed by this little old man, so sordid and so ugly. Father d'Aigrigny knew too well the customs of the Company, to believe his humble secretary capable of assuming so suddenly these airs of transcendent superiority without a motive, or rather, without a positive right. Late, too late, the reverend father perceived, that this subordinate agent might be partly a spy, partly an experienced assistant, who, according to the constitutions of the Order, had the power and mission to depose and provisionally replace, in certain urgent cases, the incapable person over whom he was stationed as a guard. The reverend father was not deceived. From the general to the provincials, and to the rectors of the colleges, all the superior members of the Order have stationed near them, often without their knowledge, and in apparently the lowest capacities, men able to assume their functions at any given moment, and who, with this view, constantly keep up a direct correspondence with Rome.

From the moment Rodin had assumed this position, the manners of Father d'Aigrigny, generally so haughty, underwent a change. Though it cost him a good deal, he said with hesitation, mingled with deference: "You have, no doubt, the right to command me—who hitherto have commanded." Rodin, without answering, drew from his well-rubbed and greasy pocket-book a slip of paper, stamped upon both sides, on which were written several lines in Latin. When he had read it, Father d'Aigrigny pressed this paper respectfully, even religiously, to his lips: then returned it to Rodin, with a low bow. When he again raised his head, he was purple with shame and vexation. Notwithstanding his habits of passive obedience and immutable respect for the will of the Order, he felt a bitter and violent rage at seeing himself thus abruptly deposed from power. That was not all. Though, for a long time past, all relations in gallantry had ceased between him and Mme.

de Saint-Dizier, the latter was not the less a woman; and for him to suffer this humiliation in presence of a woman was, undoubtedly, cruel, as, notwithstanding his entrance into the Order, he had not wholly laid aside the character of man of the world. Moreover, the princess, instead of appearing hurt and offended by this sudden transformation of the superior into a subaltern, and of the subaltern into a superior, looked at Rodin with a sort of curiosity mingled with interest. As a woman—as a woman, intensely ambitious, seeking to connect herself with every powerful influence—the princess loved this strange species of contrast. She found it curious and interesting to see this man, almost in rags, mean in appearance, and ignobly ugly, and but lately the most humble of subordinates, look down from the height of his superior intelligence upon the nobleman by birth, distinguished for the elegance of his manners, and just before so considerable a personage in the Society. From that moment, as the more important personage of the two, Rodin completely took the place of Father d'Aigrigny in the princess's mind. The first pang of humiliation over, the reverend father, though his pride bled inwardly, applied all his knowledge of the world to behave with redoubled courtesy towards Rodin, who had become his superior by this abrupt change of fortune. But the ex-socius, incapable of appreciating, or rather of acknowledging, such delicate shades of manner, established himself at once, firmly, imperiously, brutally, in his new position, not from any reaction of offended pride, but from a consciousness of what he was really worth. A long acquaintance with Father d'Aigrigny had revealed to him the inferiority of the latter.

"You threw away your pen," said Father d'Aigrigny to Rodin with extreme deference, "while I was dictating a note for Rome. Will you do me the favor to tell me how I have acted wrong?"

"Directly," replied Rodin, in his sharp, cutting voice. "For a long time this affair appeared to me above your strength; but I abstained from interfering. And yet what mistakes! what poverty of invention; what coarseness in the means employed to bring it to bear!"

"I can hardly understand your reproaches," answered Father d' Aigrigny, mildly, though a secret bitterness made its way through his apparent submission. "Was not the success certain, had it not been for this codicil? Did you not yourself assist in the measures that you now blame?"

"You commanded, then, and it was my duty to obey.

Besides, you were just on the point of succeeding—not because of the means you had taken—but in spite of those means, with all their awkward and revolting brutality."

"Sir—you are severe," said Father d'Aigrigny.

"I am just. One has to be prodigiously clever, truly, to shut up any one in a room, and then lock the door! And yet, what else have you done? The daughters of General Simon?—imprisoned at Leipsic, shut up in a convent at Paris! Adrienne de Cardoville?—placed in confinement. Sleepinbuff?—put in prison. Djalma?—quieted by a narcotic. One only ingenious method, and a thousand times safer, because it acted morally, not materially, was employed to remove M. Hardy. As for your other proceedings—they were all bad, uncertain, dangerous. Why? Because they were violent, and violence provokes violence. Then it is no longer a struggle of keen, skilful, persevering men, seeing through the darkness in which they walk, but a match of fisticuffs in broad day. Though we should be always in action, we should always shrink from view; and yet you could find no better plan than to draw universal attention to us by proceedings at once open and deplorably notorious. To make them more secret, you call in the guard, the commissary of police, the jailers, for your accomplices. It is pitiable, sir; nothing but the most brilliant success could cover such wretched folly; and this success has been wanting."

"Sir," said Father d'Aigrigny, deeply hurt, for the Princess de Saint-Dizier, unable to conceal the sort of admiration caused in her by the plain, decisive words of Rodin, looked at her old lover with an air that seemed to say, "He is right;"—"sir, you are more than severe in your judgment; and, notwithstanding the deference I owe to you, I must observe, that I am not accustomed——"

"There are many other things to which you are not accustomed," said Rodin, harshly interrupting the reverend father; "but you will accustom yourself to them. You have hitherto had a false idea of your own value. There is the old leaven of the soldier and the worldling fermenting within you, which deprives your reason of the coolness, lucidity, and penetration that it ought to possess. You have been a fine military officer, brisk and gay, foremost in wars and festivals, with pleasures and women. These things have half worn you out. You will never be anything but a subaltern; you have been thoroughly tested. You will always want that vigor and concentration of mind

which governs men and events. That vigor and concentration of mind I have—and do you know why? It is because, solely devoted to the service of the Company, I have always been ugly, dirty, unloved, unloving—I have all my manhood about me!"

In pronouncing these words, full of cynical pride, Rodin was truly fearful. The Princess de Saint-Dizier thought him almost handsome by his energy and audacity.

Father d'Aigrigny, feeling himself overawed, invincibly and inexorably, by this diabolical being, made a last effort to resist, and exclaimed, "Oh! sir, these boastings are no proofs of valor and power. We must see you at work."

"Yes," replied Rodin, coldly; "do you know at what work?" Rodin was fond of this interrogative mode of expression. "Why, at the work that you so basely abandon."

"What!" cried the Princess de Saint-Dizier; for Father d'Aigrigny, stupefied at Rodin's audacity, was unable to utter a word.

"I say," resumed Rodin, slowly, "that I undertake to bring to a good issue this affair of the Rennepont inheritance, which appears to you so desperate."

"You?" cried Father d'Aigrigny. "You?"

"I."

"But they have unmasked our manœuvres."

"So much the better; we shall be obliged to invent others."

"But they will suspect us in everything."

"So much the better; the success that is difficult is the most certain."

"What! do you hope to make Gabriel consent not to revoke his donation, which is perhaps illegal."

"I mean to bring in to the coffers of the Company the whole of the two hundred and twelve millions, of which they wish to cheat us. Is that clear?"

"It is clear—but impossible."

"And I tell you that it is, and must be possible. Do you not understand, short-sighted as you are!" cried Rodin, animated to such a degree that his cadaverous face became slightly flushed; "do you not understand that it is no longer in our choice to hesitate? Either these two hundred and twelve millions must be ours—and then the re-establishment of our sovereign influence in France is sure—for, in these venal times, with such a sum at command, you may bribe or overthrow a government, or light up the flame of

civil war, and restore legitimacy, which is our natural ally, and, owing all to us, would give us all in return—"

"That is clear," cried the princess, clasping her hands in admiration.

"If, on the contrary," resumed Rodin, "these two hundred and twelve millions fall into the hands of the family of the Renneponts, it will be our ruin and our destruction. We shall create a stock of bitter and implacable enemies. Have you not heard the execrable designs of that Rennepont, with regard to the association he recommends, and which, by an accursed fatality, his race are just in a condition to realize? Think of the forces that would rally round these millions. There would be Marshal Simon, acting in the name of his daughters—that is, the man of the people become a duke, without being the vainer for it, which secures his influence with the mob, because military spirit and Bonapartism still represent, in the eyes of the French populace, the traditions of national honor and glory. There would be Francis Hardy, the liberal, independent, enlightened citizen, the type of the great manufacturer, the friend of progress, the benefactor of his workmen. There would be Gabriel—"the good priest," as they say!—the apostle of the primitive gospel, the representative of the democracy of the church, of the poor country curate as opposed to the rich bishop, the tiller of the vine as opposed to him who sits in the shade of it; the propagator of all the ideas of fraternity, emancipation, progress—to use their own jargon—and that, not in the name of revolutionary and incendiary politics, but in the name of a religion of charity, love, and peace—to speak as they speak. There, too, would be Adrienne de Cardoville, the type of elegance, grace, and beauty, the priestess of the senses, which she deifies by refining and cultivating them. I need not tell you of her wit and audacity; you know them but too well. No one could be more dangerous to us than this creature, a patrician in blood, a plebeian in heart, a poet in imagination. Then, too, there would be Prince Djalma, chivalrous, bold, ready for adventure, knowing nothing of civilized life, implacable in his hate as in his affection, a terrible instrument for whoever can make use of him. In this detestable family, even such a wretch as Sleepinbuff, who in himself is of no value, raised and purified by the contact of these generous and far from narrow natures (as they call them), might represent the working class, and take a large share in the influence of that association. Now do you not think that if all these people, already exasperated against us, because

(as they say) we have wished to rob them, should follow the detestable counsels of this Rennepont—should unite their forces around this immense fortune, which would strengthen them a hundred-fold—do you not think that, if they declare a deadly war against us, they will be the most dangerous enemies that we have ever had? I tell you that the Company has never been in such serious peril; yes, it is now a question of life and death. We must no longer defend ourselves, but lead the attack, so as to annihilate this accursed race of Rennepont, and obtain possession of these millions.

At this picture, drawn by Rodin with a feverish animation, which had only the more influence from its unexpectedness, the princess and Father d'Aigrigny looked at each other in confusion.

"I confess," said the reverend father to Rodin, "I had not considered all the dangerous consequences of this association, recommended by M. de Rennepont. I believe that the heirs, from the characters we know them to be possessed of, would wish to realize this Utopia. The peril is great and pressing; what is to be done?"

"What, sir? You have to act upon ignorant, heroic, enthusiastic natures like Djalma's—sensual and eccentric characters like Adrienne de Cardoville's—simple and ingenuous minds like Rose and Blanche Simon's—honest and frank dispositions like Francis Hardy's—angelic and pure souls like Gabriel's—brutal and stupid instincts like Jacques'—and can you ask, "What is to be done?"

"In truth, I do not understand you," said Father d'Aigrigny.

"I believe it. Your past conduct shows as much," replied Rodin, contemptuously. "You have had recourse to the lowest and most mechanical contrivances, instead of acting upon the noble and generous passions, which, once united, would constitute so formidable a bond; but which, now divided and isolated, are open to every surprise, every seduction, every attack! Do you, at length understand me? Not yet?" added Rodin, shrugging his shoulders. "Answer me—do people die of despair?"

"Yes."

"May not the gratitude of successful love reach the last limits of insane generosity?"

"Yes."

"May there not be such horrible deceptions, that suicide is the only refuge from frightful realities?"

"Yes."

"May not the excess of sensuality lead to the grave by a slow and voluptuous agony?"

"Yes."

"Are there not in life such terrible circumstances that the most worldly, the firmest, the most impious characters, throw themselves blindly, overwhelmed with despair, into the arms of religion, and abandon all earthly greatness for sackcloth, and prayers, and solitude?"

"Yes."

"Are there not a thousand occasions in which the reaction of the passions works the most extraordinary changes, and brings about the most tragic catastrophes in the life of man and woman?"

"No doubt."

"Well, then! why ask me, 'What is to be done?' What would you say, for example, if before three months are over, the most dangerous members of this family of the Renneponts should come to implore, upon their knees, admission to that very Society which they now hold in horror, and from which Gabriel has just separated?"

"Such a conversion is impossible," cried Father d'Aigrigny.

"Impossible? What were you, sir, fifteen years ago?" said Rodin. "An impious and debauched man of the world. And yet you came to us, and your wealth became ours. What! we have conquered princes, kings, popes; we have absorbed and extinguished in our unity magnificent intelligences, which, from afar, shone with too dazzling a light; we have all but governed two worlds; we have perpetuated our Society, full of life, rich and formidable, even to this day, through all the hate, and all the persecutions that have assailed us; and yet we shall not be able to get the better of a single family, which threatens our Company, and has despoiled us of a large fortune? What! we are not skilful enough to obtain this result without having recourse to awkward and dangerous violence? You do not know, then, the immense field that is thrown open by the mutually destructive power of human passions, skilfully combined, opposed, restrained, excited?—particularly," added Rodin, with a strange smile, "when, thanks to a powerful ally, these passions are sure to be redoubled in ardor and energy."

"What ally?" asked Father d'Aigrigny, who, as well as the Princess de Saint-Dizier, felt a sort of admiration mixed with terror.

"Yes," resumed Rodin, without answering the reverend father; "this formidable ally, who comes to our assistance, may bring about the most astonishing transformations—make the coward brave, and the impious credulous, and the gentle ferocious——"

"But this ally!" cried the Princess, oppressed with a vague sense of fear. "This great and formidable ally—who is he?"

"If he comes," resumed Rodin, still impassible, "the youngest and most vigorous, every moment in danger of death, will have no advantage over the sick man at his last gasp."

"But who is this ally?" exclaimed Father d'Aigrigny, more and more alarmed, for as the picture became darker, Rodin's face become more cadaverous.

"This ally, who can decimate a population, may carry away with him in the shroud that he drags at his heels, the whole of an accursed race; but even he must respect the life of that great intangible body, which does not perish with the death of its members—for the spirit of the Society of Jesus is immortal!"

"And this ally?"

"Oh! this ally," resumed Rodin, "who advances with slow steps, and whose terrible coming is announced by mournful presentiments——"

"Is——"

"The Cholera!"

These words, pronounced by Rodin in an abrupt voice, made the Princess and Father d'Aigrigny grow pale and tremble. Rodin's look was gloomy and chilling, like a spectre's. For some moments, the silence of the tomb reigned in the saloon. Rodin was the first to break it. Still impassible, he pointed with imperious gesture to the table, where a few minutes before he had himself been humbly seated, and said in a sharp voice to Father d'Aigrigny, "Write!"

The reverend father started at first with surprise; then, remembering that from a superior he had become an inferior, he rose, bowed lowly to Rodin, as he passed before him, seated himself at the table, took the pen, and said, "I am ready."

Rodin dictated, and the reverend Father wrote as follows: "By the mismanagement of the Reverend Father d'Aigrigny, the affair of the inheritance of the Rennepont family has been seriously compromised. The sum amounts to two

hundred and twelve millions. Notwithstanding the check we have received, we believe we may safely promise to prevent these Renneponts from injuring the Society, and to restore the two hundred and twelve millions to their legitimate possessors. We only ask for the most complete and extensive powers."

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A quarter of an hour after this scene, Rodin left Saint-Dizier House, brushing with his sleeve the old greasy hat, which he had pulled off to return the salute of the porter by a very low bow.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE STRANGER.

The following scene took place on the morrow of the day in which Father d'Aigrigny had been so rudely degraded by Rodin to the subaltern position formerly occupied by the socius.

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It is well known that the Rue Clovis is one of the most solitary streets in the Montagne St. Geneviève district. At the epoch of this narrative, the house No. 4, in this street, was composed of one principal building, through which ran a dark passage, leading to a little, gloomy court, at the end of which was a second building, in a singularly miserable and dilapidated condition. On the ground-floor, in front of the house, was a half-subterraneous shop, in which was sold charcoal, fagots, vegetables, and milk. Nine o'clock in the morning had just struck. The mistress of the shop, one Mother Arsène, an old woman of a mild, sickly countenance, clad in a brown stuff dress, with a red bandana round her head, was mounted on the top step of the stairs which led down to her door, and was employed in setting out her goods—that is, on one side of her door she placed a tin milk-can, and on the other some bunches of stale vegetables, flanked with yellowed cabbages. At the bottom of the steps, in the shadowy depths of the cellar, one could see the light of the burning charcoal in a little stove. This shop situated at the side of the passage, served as a porter's lodge, and the old woman acted as portress. On a sudden, a pretty little creature, coming from the house, entered

lightly and merrily the shop. This young girl was Rose-Pompon, the intimate friend of the Bacchanal Queen.—Rose-Pompon, a *widow* for the moment, whose bacchanalian *cicisbeo* was Ninny Moulin, the orthodox scapegrace, who, on occasion, after drinking his fill, could transform himself into Jacques Dumoulin, the religious writer, and pass gayly from dishevelled dances to ultramontane polemics, from Storm-blown Tulips to Catholic pamphlets.

Rose-Pompon had just quitted her bed, as appeared by the negligence of her strange morning costume; no doubt, for want of any other head-dress, on her beautiful light hair, smooth and well-combed, was stuck jauntily a foraging-cap, borrowed from her masquerading costume. Nothing could be more sprightly than that face, seventeen years old, rosy, fresh, dimpled, and brilliantly lighted up by a pair of gay, sparkling blue eyes. Rose-Pompon was so closely enveloped from the neck to the feet in a red and green plaid cloak, rather faded, that one could guess the cause of her modest embarrassment. Her naked feet, so white that one could not tell if she wore stockings or not, were slipped into little morocco shoes, with plated buckles. It was easy to perceive that her cloak concealed some article which she held in her hand.

"Good-day, Rose-Pompon," said Mother Arsène with a kindly air; "you are early this morning. Had you no dance last night?"

"Don't talk of it, Mother Arsène; I had no heart to dance. Poor Cephyse—the Bacchanal Queen—has done nothing but cry all night. She cannot console herself, that her lover should be in prison."

"Now, look here, my girl," said the old woman, "I must speak to you about your friend Cephyse. You won't be angry?"

"Am I ever angry?" said Rose-Pompon, shrugging her shoulders.

"Don't you think that M. Philemon will scold me on his return?"

"Scold you! what for?"

"Because of his rooms, that you occupy."

"Why, Mother Arsène, did not Philemon tell you, that, in his absence, I was to be as much mistress of his two rooms as I am of himself?"

"I do not speak of you, but of your friend Cephyse, whom you have also brought to occupy M. Philemon's lodgings."

"And where would she have gone without me, my good

Mother Arsène? Since her lover was arrested, she has not dared to return home, because she owes ever so many quarters. Seeing her troubles, I said to her: 'Come, lodge at Philemon's. When he returns, we must find another place for you.'"

"Well, little lovey—if you only assure me that M. Philemon will not be angry——"

"Angry! for what? That we spoil his things? A fine set of things he has to spoil! I broke his last cup yesterday—and am forced to fetch the milk in this comic concern."

So saying, laughing with all her might, Rose-Pompon drew her pretty little white arm from under her cloak, and presented to Mother Arsène one of those champagne glasses of colossal capacity, which hold about a bottle.

"Oh, dear!" said the greengrocer in amazement; "it is like a glass trumpet."

"It is Philemon's grand gala-glass, which they gave him when he took his degrees in boating," said Rose-Pompon, gravely.

"And to think you must put your milk in it—I am really ashamed," said Mother Arsène.

"So am I! If I were to meet any one on the stairs, holding this glass in my hand like a Roman candlestick, I should burst out laughing, and break the last remnant of Philemon's bazaar, and he would give me his malediction."

"There is no danger that you will meet any one. The first-floor is gone out, and the second gets up very late."

"Talking of lodgers," said Rose-Pompon, "is there not a room to let on the second-floor in the rear house? It might do for Cephyse, when Philemon comes back."

"Yes, there is a little closet in the roof—just over the two rooms of the mysterious old fellow," said Mother Arsène.

"Oh, yes! Father Charlemagne. Have you found out anything more about him?"

"Dear me, no, my girl! only that he came this morning at break of day, and knocked at my shutters. 'Have you received a letter for me, my good lady?' said he—for he is always so polite, the dear man!—'No, sir,' said I.—'Well, then, pray don't disturb yourself, my good lady!' said he; 'I will call again.' And so he went away."

"Does he never sleep in the house?"

"Never. No doubt, he lodges somewhere else—but he passes some hours here, once every four or five days."

"And always comes alone?"

"Always."

"Are you quite sure? Does he never manage to slip in some little puss of a woman? Take care, or Philemon will give you notice to quit," said Rose-Pompon, with an air of mock-modesty.

"M. Charlemagne with a woman! Oh, poor dear man!" said the greengrocer, raising her hands to heaven; "if you saw him, with his greasy hat, his old gray coat, his patched umbrella, and his simple face, he looks more like a saint than anything else."

"But then, Mother Arsène, what does the saint do here, all alone for hours, in that hole at the bottom of the court, where one can hardly see at noon-day?"

"That's what I ask myself, my dovey, what can he be doing? It can't be that he comes to look at his furniture, for he has nothing but a flock-bed, a table, a stove, a chair, and an old trunk."

"Somewhat in the style of Philemon's establishment," said Rose-Pompon.

"Well, notwithstanding that, Rosey, he is as much afraid that any one should come into his room, as if we were all thieves, and his furniture was made of massy gold. He has had a patent lock put on the door, at his own expense; he never leaves me his key; and he lights his fire himself, rather than let anybody into his room."

"And you say he is old?"

"Yes, fifty or sixty."

"And ugly?"

"Just fancy, little viper's eyes, looking as if they had been bored with a gimlet, in a face as pale as death—so pale, that the lips are white. That's for his appearance. As for his character, the good old man is so polite!—he pulls off his hat so often, and makes you such low bows, that it is quite embarrassing."

"But, to come back to the point," resumed Rose-Pompon, "what can he do all alone in those two rooms? If Cephyse should take the closet, on Philemon's return, we may amuse ourselves by finding out something about it. How much do they want for the little room?"

"Why, it is in such bad condition, that I think the landlord would let it go for fifty or fifty-five francs a-year, for there is no room for a stove, and the only light comes through a small pane in the roof."

"Poor Cephyse!" said Rose, sighing, and shaking her head sorrowfully. "After having amused herself so well, and flung away so much money with Jacques Rennepont,

to live in such a place, and support herself by hard work! She must have courage!"

"Why, indeed, there is a great difference between that closet and the coach-and-four in which Cephyse came to fetch you the other day, with all the fine masks, that looked so gay—particularly the fat man in the silver paper helmet, with the plume and the top boots. What a jolly fellow!"

"Yes, Ninny Moulin. There is no one like him to dance the forbidden fruit. You should see him with Cephyse, the Bacchanal Queen. Poor laughing, noisy thing!—the only noise she makes now is crying."

"Oh! these young people—these young people!" said the greengrocer.

"Easy, Mother Arsène; you were young once."

"I hardly know. I have always thought myself much the same as I am now."

"And your lovers, Mother Arsène?"

"Lovers! Oh, yes! I was too ugly for that—and too well taken care of."

"Your mother looked after you, then?"

"No, my girl; but I was harnessed."

"Harnessed!" cried Rose-Pompon, in amazement, interrupting the dealer.

"Yes,—harnessed to a water-cart, along with my brother. So, you see, when we had drawn like a pair of horses for eight or ten hours a day, I had no heart to think of nonsense."

"Poor Mother Arsène, what a hard life," said Rose-Pompon, with interest.

"In the winter, when it froze, it was hard enough. I and my brother were obliged to be rough-shod, for fear of slipping."

"What a trade for a woman! It breaks one's heart. And they forbid people to harness dogs!" added Rose-Pompon, sententiously.*

"Why, 'tis true," resumed Mother Arsène. "Animals are sometimes better off than people. But what would you have? One must live, you know. As you make your bed, you must lie. It was hard enough, and I got a disease of the lungs by it—which was not my fault. The strap, with which I was harnessed, pressed so hard against my chest, that I could scarcely breathe: so I left the trade, and took

* There are, really, ordinances, full of a touching interest for the canine race, which forbid the harnessing of dogs.

to a shop, which is just to tell you, that if I had had a pretty face and opportunity, I might have come like so many other young people, who begin with laughter and finish —"

"With a laugh t'other side of the mouth—you would say; it is true, Mother Arsène. But, you see, every one has not the courage to go into harness, in order to remain virtuous. A body says to herself, you must have some amusement while you are young and pretty—you will not always be seventeen years old—and then—and then—the world will end, or you will get married."

"But, perhaps, it would have been better to begin by that."

"Yes, but one is too stupid; one does not know how to catch the men, or to frighten them. One is simple, confiding, and they only laugh at us. Why, Mother Arsène, I am myself an example that would make you shudder; but 'tis quite enough to have had one's sorrows, without fretting one's self at the remembrance."

"What, my beauty! you, so young and gay, have had sorrows?"

"Ah, Mother Arsène! I believe you. At fifteen and a half I began to cry, and never left off till I was sixteen. That was enough, I think."

"They deceived you, mademoiselle?"

"They did worse. They treated me as they have treated many a poor girl, who had no more wish to go wrong than I had. My story is not a three volume one. My father and mother are peasants near Saint-Valéry, but so poor—so poor, that having five children to provide for, they were obliged to send me, at eight years old, to my aunt, who was a charwoman here in Paris. The good woman took me out of charity, and very kind it was of her, for I earned but little. At eleven years of age she sent me to work in one of the factories of the Faubourg Saint-Antoine. I don't wish to speak ill of the masters of these factories; but what do they care, if little boys and girls are mixed up pell-mell with young men and women of eighteen to twenty? Now you see, there, as everywhere, some are no better than they should be; they are not particular in word or deed, and I ask you, what an example for the children, who hear and see more than you think for. Then, what happens? They get accustomed as they grow older, to hear and see things, that afterwards will not shock them at all."

"What you say there is true, Rose-Pompon. Poor children! who takes any trouble about them?—not their father or mother, for they are at their daily work."

"Yes, yes, Mother Arsène, it is all very well; it is easy to cry down a young girl that has gone wrong; but if they knew all the inns and outs, they would perhaps pity rather than blame her. To come back to myself—at fifteen years old I was tolerably pretty. One day I had something to ask of the head clerk. I went to him in his private room. He told me he would grant what I wanted, and even take me under his patronage, if I would listen to him; and he began by trying to kiss me. I resisted. Then he said to me:—'You refuse my offer? You shall have no more work; I discharge you from the factory.'"

"Oh, the wicked man!" said Mother Arsène.

"I went home all in tears, and my poor aunt encouraged me not to yield, and she would try to place me elsewhere. Yes—but it was impossible; the factories were all full. Misfortunes never come single; my aunt fell ill, and there was not a sou in the house; I plucked up my courage, and returned to entreat the mercy of the clerk at the factory. Nothing would do. 'So much the worse,' said he; 'you are throwing away your luck. If you had been more complying, I should perhaps have married you.' What could I do, Mother Arsène?—misery was staring me in the face; I had no work; my aunt was ill; the clerk said he would marry me—I did like so many others."

"And when, afterwards, you spoke to him about marriage?"

"Of course he laughed at me, and in six months left me. Then I wept all the tears in my body, till none remained—then I was very ill—and then—I consoled myself, as one may console one's self for anything. After some changes, I met with Philemon. It is upon him that I revenge myself for what others have done to me. I am his tyrant," added Rose-Pompon, with a tragic air, as the cloud passed away which had darkened her pretty face during her recital to Mother Arsène.

"It is true," said the latter thoughtfully. "They deceive a poor girl—who is there to protect or defend her? Oh! the evil we do does not always come from ourselves, and then——"

"I spy Ninny Moulin?" cried Rose-Pompon, interrupting the greengrocer, and pointing to the other side of the street. "How early abroad! What can he want with me?" and Rose wrapped herself still more closely and modestly in her cloak.

It was indeed Jacques Dumoulin, who advanced with his

hat stuck on one side, with rubicund nose and sparkling eye, dressed in a loose coat, which displayed the rotundity of his abdomen. His hands, one of which held a huge cane shouldered like a musket, were plunged into the vast pockets of his outer garment.

Just as he reached the threshold of the door, no doubt with the intention of speaking to the portress, he perceived Rose-Pompon. "What!" he exclaimed, "my pupil already stirring? That is fortunate. I came on purpose to bless her at the rise of morn!"

So saying, Ninny Moulin advanced with open arms towards Rose-Pompon who drew back a step.

"What, ungrateful child!" resumed the writer on divinity. "Will you refuse me the morning's paternal kiss?"

"I accept paternal kisses from none but Philemon. I had a letter from him yesterday, with a jar of preserves, two geese, a bottle of home-made brandy, and an eel. What ridiculous presents! I kept the drink, and changed the rest for two darling live pigeons, which I have installed in Philemon's cabinet, and a very pretty dove-cote it makes me. For the rest, my husband is coming back with seven hundred francs, which he got from his respectable family, under pretence of learning the bass viol, the cornet-à-piston, and the speaking trumpet, so as to make his way in society, and a slap-up marriage—to use your expression—my good child."

"Well, my dear pupil, we will taste the family brandy, and enjoy ourselves in expectation of Philemon and his seven hundred francs."

So saying, Ninny Moulin slapped the pockets of his waistcoat, which gave forth a metallic sound, and added: "I come to propose to you to embellish my life, to-day and to-morrow, and even the day after, if your heart is willing."

"If the amusements are decent and paternal, my heart does not say no."

"Be satisfied; I will act by you as your grandfather, your great-grandfather, your family portrait. We will have a ride, a dinner, the play, a fancy dress ball, and a supper afterwards. Will that suit you?"

"On condition that poor Cephyse is to go with us. It will raise her spirits."

"Well, Cephyse shall be of the party."

"Have you come into a fortune, great apostle?"

"Better than that, most rosy and pompous of all Rose-Pom-

pons! I am head editor of a religious journal; and as I must make some appearance in so respectable a concern, I ask every month for four weeks in advance, and three days of liberty. On this condition, I consent to play the saint for twenty-seven days out of thirty, and to be always as grave and heavy as the paper itself."

"A journal! that will be something droll, and dance forbidden steps all alone on the tables of the cafés."

"Yes, it will be droll enough; but not for everybody They are rich sacristans, who pay the expenses. They don't look to money, provided the journal bites, tears, burns, pounds, exterminates and destroys. On my word of honor, I shall never have been in such a fury!" added Ninny Moulin, with a loud, hoarse laugh. "I shall wash the wounds of my adversaries with venom of the finest vintage, and gall of the first quality."

For his peroration, Ninny Moulin imitated the pop of uncorking a bottle of champagne—which made Rose-Pompon laugh heartily.

"And what," resumed she, "will be the name of your journal of sacristans?"

"It will be called 'Neighborly Love.'"

"Come! that is a very pretty name."

"Wait a little! there is a second title."

"Let us hear it."

"'Neighborly Love; or, the Exterminator of the Incredulous, the Indifferent, the Lukewarm, and Others,' with this motto from the great Bossuet: 'Those who are not for us are against us.'"

"That is what Philemon says in the battles at the Chaumière, when he shakes his cane."

"Which proves, that the genius of the Eagle of Meaux is universal. I only reproach him for having been jealous of Molière."

"Bah! actor's jealousy," said Rose-Pompon.

"Naughty girl!" cried Ninny Moulin, threatening her with his finger.

"But if you are going to exterminate Madame de la Sainte-Colombe, who is somewhat lukewarm—how about your marriage?"

"My journal will advance it, on the contrary. Only think! editor-in-chief is a superb position; the sacristans will praise, and push, and support, and bless me; I shall get La-Sainte-Colombe—and then, what a life I'll lead!"

At this moment, a postman entered the shop, and deliv-

ered a letter to the greengrocer, saying: "For M. Charlemagne, post-paid!"

"My!" said Rose-Pompon; "it is for the little mysterious old man, who has such extraordinary ways. Does it come from far?"

"I believe you; it comes from Italy, from Rome," said Ninny Moulin, looking in his turn at the letter, which the greengrocer held in her hand. "Who is the astonishing little old man of whom you speak?"

"Just imagine to yourself, my great apostle," said Rose-Pompon, "a little old man, who has two rooms at the bottom of that court. He never sleeps there, but comes from time to time, and shuts himself up for hours, without ever allowing any one to enter his lodging, and without any one knowing what he does there."

"He is a conspirator," said Ninny Moulin, laughing, "or else a coiner."

"Poor dear man," said Mother Arsène, "what has he done with his false money? He pays me always in sous for the bit of bread and the radish I furnish him for his breakfast."

"And what is the name of this mysterious chap?" asked Dumoulin.

"M. Charlemagne," said the greengrocer. "But look, when one speaks of the devil, one is sure to see his horns."

"Where's the horns?"

"There, by the side of the house—that little old man, who walks with his neck awry, and his umbrella under his arm."

"M. Rodin!" ejaculated Ninny Moulin, retreating hastily, and descending three steps into the shop, in order not to be seen. Then he added: "You say, that this gentleman calls himself——"

"M. Charlemagne—do you know him?" asked the greengrocer.

"What the devil does he do here, under a false name?" said Jacques Dumoulin to himself.

"You know him?" said Rose-Pompon, with impatience "You are quite confused."

"And this gentleman has two rooms in this house, and comes here mysteriously," said Jacques Dumoulin, more and more surprised.

"Yes," resumed Rose-Pompon; "you can see see his windows from Philemon's dove-cote."

"Quick! quick! let me go into the passage, that I may not meet him," said Dumoulin.

And, without having been perceived by Rodin, he glided from the shop into the passage, and thence mounted to the stairs, which led to the apartment occupied by Rose-Pompon.

"Good-morning, M. Charlemagne," said Mother Arsène to Rodin, who made his appearance on the threshold. "You come twice in a day; that is right, for your visits are extremely rare."

"You are too polite, my good lady," said Rodin, with a very courteous bow; and he entered the shop of the greengrocer.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE DEN.

Rodin's countenance, when he entered Mother Arsène's shop, was expressive of the most simple candor. He leaned his hands on the knob of his umbrella, and said: "I much regret, my good lady, that I roused you so early this morning."

"You do not come often enough, my dear sir, for me to find fault with you."

"How can I help it, my good lady? I live in the country, and only come hither from time to time to settle my little affairs."

"Talking of that, sir, the letter you expected yesterday has arrived this morning. It is large, and comes from far. Here it is," said the greengrocer, drawing it from her pocket; "it cost nothing for postage."

"Thank you, my good lady," said Rodin, taking the letter with apparent indifference, and putting it into the side-pocket of his great-coat, which he carefully buttoned over.

"Are you going up to your rooms, sir?"

"Yes, my good lady."

"Then I will get ready your little provisions," said Mother Arsène; "as usual, I suppose, my dear sir?"

"Just as usual."

"It shall be ready in the twinkling of an eye, sir."

So saying, the greengrocer took down an old basket; after throwing into it three or four pieces of turf, a little bundle of wood, and some charcoal, she covered all this fuel with a cabbage leaf; then, going to the further end of the shop, she took from a chest a large round loaf, cut off a slice, and

selecting a magnificent radish with the eye of a connoisseur, divided it in two, made a hole in it, which she filled with gray salt, joined the two pieces together again, and placed it carefully by the side of the bread, on the cabbage leaf which separated the eatables from the combustibles. Finally, taking some embers from the stove, she put them into a little earthen pot, containing ashes, which she placed also in the basket.

Then, reascending to her top step, Mother Arsène said to Rodin: "Here is your basket, sir."

"A thousand thanks, my good lady," answered Rodin, and, plunging his hand into the pocket of his trousers, he drew forth eight sous, which he counted out one by one to the greengrocer, and said to her, as he carried off his store: "Presently, when I come down again, I will return your basket as usual."

"Quite at your service, my dear sir, quite at your service," said Mother Arsène.

Rodin tucked his umbrella under his left arm, took up the greengrocer's basket with his right hand, entered the dark passage, crossed the little court, and mounted with light step to the second story of a dilapidated building; there, drawing a key from his pocket, he opened a door, which he locked carefully after him. The first of the two rooms which he occupied was completely unfurnished: as for the second, it is impossible to imagine a more gloomy and miserable den. Papering so much worn, torn and faded, that no one could recognize its primitive color, bedecked the walls. A wretched flock-bed, covered with a moth-fretted blanket; a stool, and a little table of worm-eaten wood; an earthenware stove, as cracked as old china; a trunk with a padlock, placed under the bed—such was the furniture of this desolate hole. A narrow window, with dirty panes, hardly gave any light to this room, which was almost deprived of air by the height of the building in front; two old cotton pocket-handkerchiefs, fastened together with pins, and made to slide upon a string stretched across the window, served for curtains. The plaster of the roof, coming through the broken and disjointed tiles, showed the extreme neglect of the inhabitant of this abode. After locking his door, Rodin threw his hat and umbrella on the bed, placed his basket on the ground, set the radish and bread on the table, and, kneeling down before his stove, stuffed it with fuel, and lighted it by blowing with vigorous lungs on the embers contained in his earthen pot.

When, to use the consecrated expression, the stove began to draw, Rodin spread out the handkerchiefs, which served him for curtains; then, thinking himself quite safe from every eye, he took from the side-pocket of his great-coat the letter that Mother Arsène had given him. In doing so, he brought out several papers and different articles; one of these papers, folded into a thick and rumpled packet, fell upon the table, and flew open. It contained a silver cross of the Legion of Honor, black with time. The red ribbon of this cross had almost entirely lost its original color. At sight of this cross, which he replaced in his pocket with the medal of which Faringhea had despoiled Djalma, Rodin shrugged his shoulders with a contemptuous and sardonic air; then, producing his large silver watch, he laid it on the table by the side of the letter from Rome. He looked at this letter with a singular mixture of suspicion and hope, of fear and impatient curiosity. After a moment's reflection, he prepared to unseal the envelope; but suddenly he threw it down again upon the table, as if, by a strange caprice, he had wished to prolong for a few minutes that agony of uncertainty, as poignant and irritating as the emotion of the gambler.

Looking at his watch, Rodin resolved not to open the letter, until the hand should mark half-past nine, of which it still wanted seven minutes. In one of those whims of puerile fatalism, from which great minds have not been exempt, Rodin said to himself: "I burn with impatience to open this letter. If I do not open it till half-past nine, the news will be favorable." To employ these minutes, Rodin took several turns up and down the room, and stood in admiring contemplation before two old prints, stained with damp and age, and fastened to the wall by rusty nails. The first of these works of art—the only ornaments with which Rodin had decorated this hole—was one of those coarse pictures, illuminated with red, yellow, green, and blue, such as are sold at fairs; an Italian inscription announced that this print had been manufactured at Rome. It represented a woman covered with rags, bearing a wallet, and having a little child upon her knees; a horrible hag of a fortune-teller held in her hands the hand of the little child, and seemed to read there his future fate, for these words in large blue letters issued from her mouth: "Sara Papa" (he shall be Pope).

The second of these works of art, which appeared to inspire Rodin with deep meditations, was an excellent etching, whose careful finish and bold, correct drawing, contrasted

singularly with the coarse coloring of the other picture. This rare and splendid engraving, which had cost Rodin six louis (an enormous expense for him), represented a young boy dressed in rags. The ugliness of his features was compensated by the intellectual expression of his strongly marked countenance. Seated on a stone, surrounded by a herd of swine, that he seemed employed in keeping, he was seen in front, with his elbow resting on his knee, and his chin in the palm of his hand. The pensive and reflective attitude of this young man, dressed as a beggar, the power expressed in his large forehead, the acuteness of his penetrating glance, and the firm lines of the mouth, seemed to reveal indomitable resolution, combined with superior intelligence and ready craft. Beneath this figure, the emblems of the papacy encircled a medallion, in the centre of which was the head of an old man, the lines of which, strongly marked, recalled in a striking manner, notwithstanding their look of advanced age, the features of the young swineherd. This engraving was entitled THE YOUTH OF SIXTUS V.; the color print was entitled The Prediction.*

In contemplating these prints more and more nearly, with ardent and inquiring eye, as though he had asked for hopes or inspirations from them, Rodin had come so close that, still standing, with his right arm bent behind his head, he rested, as it were, against the wall, whilst, hiding his left hand in the pocket of his black trousers, he thus held back one of the flaps of his olive great-coat. For some minutes, he remained in this meditative attitude.

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Rodin, as we have said, came seldom to this lodging; according to the rules of his Order, he had till now lived with Father d'Aigrigny, whom he was specially charged to watch. No member of the Society, particularly in the subaltern position which Rodin had hitherto held, could either shut himself in, or possess an article of furniture made to lock. By this means nothing interferes with the mutual spy-system, incessantly carried on, which forms one of the most powerful resources of the Company of Jesus. It was on account of certain combinations, purely personal to himself, though connected on some points with the interests of the Order, that Rodin, unknown to all, had taken these rooms in the Rue Clovis. And it was from the depths of this ob-

* According to the tradition, it was predicted to the mother of Sixtus V. that he would be pope; and, in his youth, he is said to have kept swine.

scure den that the socius corresponded directly with the most eminent and influential personages of the sacred college. On one occasion, when Rodin wrote to Rome, that Father d'Aigrigny, having received orders to quit France without seeing his dying mother, had hesitated to set out, the socius had added, in form of postscriptum, at the bottom of the letter denouncing to the General of the Order the hesitation of Father d'Aigrigny:

"Tell the Prince Cardinal that he may rely upon me, but I hope for his active aid in return."

This familiar manner of corresponding with the most powerful dignitary of the Order, the almost patronizing tone of the recommendation that Rodin addressed to the Prince Cardinal, proved that the socius, notwithstanding his apparently subaltern position, was looked upon, at that epoch, as a very important personage, by many of the princes of the Church, who wrote to him at Paris under a false name, making use of a cipher and other customary precautions. After some moments passed in contemplation, before the portrait of Sixtus V., Rodin returned slowly to the table, on which lay the letter, which, by a sort of superstitious delay, he had deferred opening, notwithstanding his extreme curiosity. As it still wanted some minutes of half-past nine, Rodin, in order not to lose time, set about making preparations for his frugal breakfast. He placed on the table, by the side of an inkstand, furnished with pens, the slice of bread and the radish; then seating himself on his stool, with the stove, as it were, between his legs, he drew a horn-handled knife from his pocket, and, cutting alternately a morsel of bread and a morsel of radish, with a sharp, well-worn blade, he began his temperate repast with a vigorous appetite, keeping his eye fixed on the hand of his watch. When it reached the momentous hour, he unsealed the envelope with a trembling hand.

It contained two letters. The first appeared to give him little satisfaction; for, after some minutes, he shrugged his shoulders, struck the table impatiently with the handle of his knife, disdainfully pushed aside the letter with the back of his dirty hand, and perused the second epistle, holding his bread in one hand, and with the other mechanically dipping a slice of radish into the gray salt spilt on a corner of the table. Suddenly, Rodin's hand remained motionless. As he progressed in his reading, he appeared more and more interested, surprised, and struck. Rising abruptly, he ran to the window, as if to assure himself, by a second exami-

nation of the cipher, that he was not deceived. The news announced to him in the letter seemed to be unexpected. No doubt, Rodin found that he had deciphered correctly, for, letting fall his arms, not in dejection, but with the stupor of a satisfaction as unforeseen as extraordinary, he remained for some time with his head down, and his eye fixed—the only mark of joy that he gave being manifested by a loud, frequent, and prolonged respiration. Men who are as audacious in their ambition, as they are patient and obstinate in their mining and countermining, are surprised at their own success, when this latter precedes and surpasses their wise and prudent expectations. Rodin was now in this case. Thanks to prodigies of craft, address, and dissimulation, thanks to mighty promises of corruption, thanks to the singular mixture of admiration, fear, and confidence, with which his genius inspired many influential persons, Rodin now learned from members of the pontifical government, that, in case of a possible and probable occurrence, he might, within a given time, aspire, with a good chance of success, to a position which has too often excited the fear, the hate, or the envy of many sovereigns, and which has in turn, been occupied by great, good men, by abominable scoundrels, and by persons risen from the lowest grades of society. But for Rodin to attain this end with certainty, it was absolutely necessary for him to succeed in that project, which he had undertaken to accomplish without violence, and only by the play and the rebound of passions skilfully managed. The project was: To secure for the Society of Jesus the fortune of the Rennepont family.

This possession would thus have a double and immense result; for Rodin, acting in accordance with his personal views, intended to make of his Order (whose chief was at his discretion) a stepping-stone and a means of intimidation. When his first impression of surprise had passed away—an impression that was only a sort of modesty of ambition and self-diffidence, not uncommon with men of really superior powers—Rodin looked more coldly and logically on the matter, and almost reproached himself for his surprise. But soon after, by a singular contradiction, yielding to one of those puerile and absurd ideas, by which men are often carried away when they think themselves alone and unobserved, Rodin rose abruptly, took the letter which had caused him such glad surprise, and went to display it, as it were, before the eyes of the young swineherd in the picture: then, shaking his head proudly and triumphantly, casting

his reptile-glance on the portrait, he muttered between his teeth, as he placed his dirty finger on the pontifical emblem: "Eh, brother? and I also—perhaps!"

After this ridiculous interpolation, Rodin returned to his seat, and, as if the happy news he had just received had increased his appetite, he placed the letter before him, to read it once more, whilst he exercised his teeth, with a sort of joyous fury, on his hard bread and radish, chanting an old Litany.

* * * * * * *

There was something strange, great, and, above all, frightful, in the contrast afforded by this immense ambition, already almost justified by events, and contained, as it were, in so miserable an abode. Father d'Aigrigny (who, if not a very superior man, had at least some real value, was a person of high birth, very haughty, and placed in the best society) would never have ventured to aspire to what Rodin thus looked to from the first. The only aim of Father d'Aigrigny, and even this he thought presumptuous, was to be one day elected General of his Order—that Order which embraced the world. The difference of the ambitious aptitudes of these two personages is conceivable. When a man of eminent abilities, of a healthy and vivacious nature, concentrates all the strength of his mind and body upon a single point, remaining, like Rodin, obstinately chaste and frugal, and renouncing every gratification of the heart and the senses—the man, who revolts against the sacred designs of his Creator, does so almost always in favor of some monstrous and devouring passion—some infernal divinity, which, by a sacrilegious pact, asks of him, in return for the bestowal of formidable power, the destruction of every noble sentiment, and of all those ineffable attractions and tender instincts with which the Maker, in His eternal wisdom and inexhaustible munificence, has so paternally endowed His creatures.

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During the scene that we have just described, Rodin had not perceived that the curtain of a window on the third story of the building opposite had been partially drawn aside, and had half-revealed the sprightly face of Rose-Pompon, and the Silenus-like countenance of Ninny Moulin. It ensued that Rodin, notwithstanding his barricade of cotton handkerchiefs, had not been completely sheltered from the indiscreet and curious examination of the two dancers of the Storm-blown Tulip.

CHAPTER XXX.

AN UNEXPECTED VISIT.

THOUGH Rodin had experienced much surprise on reading the second letter from Rome, he did not choose that his answer should betray any such amazement. Having finished his frugal breakfast, he took a sheet of paper, and rapidly wrote in cipher the following note, in the short, abrupt style that was natural to him when not obliged to restrain himself:

"The information does not surprise me. I had foreseen it all. Indecision and cowardice always bear such fruit. This is not enough. Heretical Russia murders Catholic Poland. Rome blesses the murderers, and curses the victims.*

"Let it pass.

"In return, Russia guarantees to Rome, by Austria, the bloody suppression of the patriots of Romagna.

"That, too, is well.

"The cut-throat band of good Cardinal Albani is not sufficient for the massacre of the impious liberals. They are weary of the task.

"Not so well. They must go on."

When Rodin had written these last words, his attention was suddenly attracted by the clear and sonorous voice of Rose-Pompon, who, knowing her Béranger by heart, had opened Philemon's window, and, seated on the sill, sang with much grace and prettiness this verse of the immortal song-writer:

* On page 110 of Lamennais' *Affaires de Rome*, will be seen the following admirable scathing of Rome by the most truly evangelical spirit of our age: "So long as the issue of the conflict between Poland and her oppressors remained in the balances, the papal official organ contained not one word to offend the so long victorious nation; but hardly had she gone down under the Czar's atrocious vengeance, and the long torture of a whole land doomed to rack, and exile, and servitude began, than this same journal found no language black enough to stain those whom fortune had fled. Yet it is wrong to charge this unworthy insult to papal power; it only cringes to the law which Russia lays down to it, when it says:

"'If you want to keep your own bones unbroken, bide where you are, beside the scaffold, and, as the victims pass, hoot at them!'"

"How wrong you are! Is't you dare say
That heaven ever scowls on earth?
The earth that laughs up to its blue,
The earth that owes it joy and birth?
Oh, may the wine from vines it warms,
May holy love thence flutt'ring down,
Lend my philosophy their charms,
To drive away care's direful frown!
So, firm let's stand,
Full glass in hand,
And all evoke
The God of honest folk!"

This song, in its divine gentleness, contrasted so strangely with the cold cruelty of the few lines written by Rodin, that he started and bit his lips with rage, as he recognized the words of the great poet, truly Christian, who had dealt such rude blows to the false Church. Rodin waited for some moments with angry impatience, thinking the voice would continue; but Rose-Pompon was silent, or only continued to hum, and soon changed to another air, that of the Good Pope, which she entoned, but without words. Rodin, not venturing to look out of his window to see who was this troublesome warbler, shrugged his shoulders, resumed his pen, and continued:

"To it again. We must exasperate the independent spirits in all countries—excite *philosophic* rage all over Europe—make liberalism foam at the mouth—raise all that is wild and noisy against Rome. To effect this, we must proclaim in the face of the world these three propositions. 1. It is abominable to assert that a man may be saved in any faith whatever, provided his morals be pure. 2. It is odious and absurd to grant liberty of conscience to the people. 3. The liberty of the press cannot be held in too much horror.*

"We must bring the *Pap-fed man* to declare these propositions in every respect orthodox—show him their good effect upon despotic governments—upon true Catholics, the muzzlers of the people. He will fall into the snare. The propositions once published, the storm will burst forth. A general rising against Rome—a wide schism—the sacred college divided into three parties. One approves—the other blames—the third trembles. The *Sick Man*, still more frightened than he is now at having allowed the destruction of Poland, will shrink from the clamors, reproaches, threats, and violent ruptures that he has occasioned.

* *See* Pope Gregory XVI.'s Encyclical Letter to the Bishops in France, 1832.

"That is well—and goes far.

"Then, set the Pope to shaking the conscience of the *Sick Man*, to disturb his mind, and terrify his soul.

"To sum up. Make everything bitter to him—divide his council—isolate him—frighten him—redouble the ferocious ardor of good Albini—revive the appetite of the Sanfedists* —give them a gulf of liberals—let there be pillage, rape, massacre, as at Cesena—a downright river of Carbonaro blood—the *Sick Man* will have a surfeit of it. So many butcheries in his name—he will shrink, be sure he will shrink—every day will have its remorse, every night its terror, every minute its anguish; and the abdication he already threatens will come at last—perhaps too soon. That is now the only danger; you must provide against it.

"In case of an abdication, the grand penitentiary has understood me. Instead of confiding to a general the direction of our Order, the best militia of the Holy See, I should command it myself. Thenceforward this militia would give me no uneasiness. For instance: the Janissaries and the Prætorian Guards were always fatal to authority—why?—because they were able to organize themselves as defenders of the government, independently of the government; hence their power of intimidation.

"Clement XIV. was a fool. To brand and abolish our Company was an absurd fault. To protect and make it harmless, by declaring himself the General of the Order, is what he should have done. The Company, then at his mercy, would have consented to anything. He would have absorbed us, made us vassals of the Holy See, and would no longer have had to fear *our services*. Clement XIV. died of the cholic. Let him heed who hears. In a similar case, I should not die the same death."

* Hardly had the Sixteenth Gregory ascended the pontifical throne, than news came of the rising in Bologna. His first idea was to call the Austrians, and incite the Sanfedist volunteer bands of fanatics. Cardinal Albini defeated the liberals at Cesena, where his followers pillaged churches, sacked the town, and ill-treated women. At Forli, cold-blooded murders were committed. In 1832 the Sanfedists (*Holy Faithites*) openly paraded their medals, bearing the heads of the Duke of Modena and the Pope; letters issued by the apostolic confederation; privileges and indulgences. They took the following oath:—"I, A. B., vow to rear the throne and altar over the bones of infamous freedom-shriekers, and exterminate these latter without pity for children's cries and women's tears." The disorders perpetrated by these marauders went beyond all bounds; the Romish Court regularized anarchy and organized the Sanfedists into volunteer corps, to which fresh privileges were granted. [Revue deux Mondes, Nov, 15th, 1844,—'La Revolution en Italie.']

Just then, the clear and liquid voice of Rose-Pompon was again heard. Rodin bounded with rage upon his seat; but soon, as he listened to the following verse, new to him (for, unlike Philemon's widow, he had not his Béranger at his fingers' ends), the Jesuit, accessible to certain odd, superstitious notions, was confused and almost frightened at so singular a coincidence. It is Béranger's Good Pope who speaks:—

"What are monarchs? sheepish sots!
Or they're robbers, puffed with pride,
Wearing badges of crime blots,
Till their certain graves gape wide.
If they'll pour out coin for me,
I'll absolve them—skin and bone!
If they haggle—they shall see,
My *nieces* dancing on their throne!
So laugh away!
Leap, my fay!
Only watch *me* hurl the thunder
First of all, by Zeus under,
I'm the Pope, the whole world's wonder!"

Rodin, half-risen from his chair, with outstretched neck and attentive eye, was still listening, when Rose-Pompon, flitting like a bee from flower to flower of her *repertoire*, had already begun the delightful air of Colibri. Hearing no more, the Jesuit reseated himself, in a sort of stupor; but, after some minutes' reflection, his countenance again brightened up, and he seemed to see a lucky omen in this singular incident. He resumed his pen, and the first words he wrote partook, as it were, of this strange confidence in fate.

"I have never had more hope of success than at this moment. Another reason to neglect nothing. Every presentiment demands redoubled zeal. A new thought occurred to me yesterday.

"We shall act here in concert. I have founded an ultra-Catholic paper called *Neighborly Love*. From its ultramontane, tyrannical, liberticidal fury, it will be thought the organ of Rome. I will confirm these reports. They will cause new terrors.

"That will be well.

"I shall raise the question of the liberty of instruction. The raw liberals will support us. Like fools, they admit us to equal rights; when our privileges, our influence of the confessional, our obedience to Rome, all place us beyond the circle of equal rights, by the advantages which we enjoy. Double fools! they think us disarmed, because they have disarmed themselves towards us.

"A burning question—irritating clamors—new cause of disgust for the *Weak Man*. Every little makes a mickle.

"That also is very well.

"To sum up all in two words. The end is abdication—the means, vexation, incessant torture. The Rennepont inheritance will pay for the election. The price agreed, the merchandise will be sold."

Rodin here paused abruptly, thinking he had heard some noise at that door of his, which opened on the staircase; therefore he listened with suspended breath; but all remaining silent, he thought he must have been deceived, and took up his pen:

"I will take care of the Rennepont business—the hinge on which will turn our temporal operations. We must begin from the foundation—substitute the play of interests, and the springs of passion, for the stupid club-law of Father d'Aigrigny. He nearly compromised everything—and yet he has good parts, knows the world, has powers of seduction, quick insight—but plays ever in a single key, and is not great enough to make himself little. In his stead, I shall know how to make use of him. There is good stuff in the man. I availed myself in time of the full powers given by the R. F. G.; I may inform Father d'Aigrigny, in case of need, of the secret engagements taken by the General towards myself. Until now, I have let him invent for this inheritance the destination that you know of. A good thought, but unseasonable. The same end, by other means.

"The information was false. There are over two hundred millions. Should the eventuality occur, what was doubtful must become certain. An immense latitude is left us. The Rennepont business is now doubly mine, and within three months, the two hundred millions will be ours, by the free will of the heirs themselves. It must be so; for this failing, the temporal part would escape me, and my chances be diminished by one half. I have asked for full powers; time presses, and I act as if I had them. One piece of information is indispensable for the success of my projects. I expect it from you, and I must have it; do you understand me? The powerful influence of your brother at the Court of Vienna will serve you in this. I wish to have the most precise details as to the present position of the Duke de Reichstadt—the Napoleon II. of the Imperialists. Is it possible, by means of your brother, to open a secret correspondence with the prince, unknown to his attendants?

"Look to this promptly. It is urgent. This note will be

sent off to-day. I shall complete it to-morrow. It will reach you, as usual, by the hands of the petty shopkeeper."

At the moment when Rodin was sealing this letter within a double envelope, he thought that he again heard a noise at the door. He listened. After some silence, several knocks were distinctly audible. Rodin started. It was the first time any one had knocked at his door, since nearly a twelve-month that he occupied this room. Hastily placing the letter in his great-coat pocket, the Jesuit opened the old trunk under his bed, took from it a packet of papers wrapped in a tattered cotton handkerchief, added to them the two letters in cipher he had just received, and carefully relocked the trunk. The knocking continued without, and seemed to show more and more impatience. Rodin took the green-grocer's basket in his hand, tucked his umbrella under his arm, and went with some uneasiness to ascertain who was this unexpected visitor. He opened the door, and found himself face to face with Rose-Pompon, the troublesome singer, and who now, with a light and pretty courtesy, said to him in the most guileless manner in the world, "M. Rodin, if you please?"

CHAPTER XXXI.

FRIENDLY SERVICES.

Notwithstanding his surprise and uneasiness, Rodin did not frown. He began by locking his door after him, as he noticed the young girl's inquisitive glance. Then he said to her good-naturedly, "Who do you want, my dear?"

"M. Rodin," repeated Rose-Pompon, stoutly, opening her bright blue eyes to their full extent, and looking Rodin full in the face.

"It's not here," said he, moving towards the stairs. "I do not know him. Inquire above or below."

"No, you don't! giving yourself airs at your age!" said Rose-Pompon, shrugging her shoulders. "As if we did not know that you are M. Rodin."

"Charlemagne," said the socius, bowing; "Charlemagne, to serve you—if I am able."

"You are not able," answered Rose-Pompon, majestically; then she added with a mocking air, "So, we have our little pussy-cat hiding-places; we change our name; we are afraid Mamma Rodin will find us out."

"Come, my dear child," said the socius, with a paternal smile; "you have come to the right quarter. I am an old man, but I love youth—happy, joyous youth! Amuse your self, pray, at my expense. Only let me pass, for I am in a hurry." And Rodin again advanced towards the stairs.

"M. Rodin," said Rose-Pompon, in a solemn voice, "I have very important things to say to you, and advice to ask about a love affair."

"Why, little madcap that you are! have you nobody to tease in your own house, that you must come here?"

"I lodge in this house, M. Rodin," answered Rose-Pompon, laying a malicious stress on the name of her victim.

"You? Oh, dear, only to think I did not know I had such a pretty neighbor."

"Yes, I have lodged here six months, M. Rodin."

"Really! where?"

"On the third story, front, M. Rodin."

"It was you, then, that sang so well just now?"

"Rather."

"You gave me great pleasure, I must say."

"You are very polite, M. Rodin."

"You lodge, I suppose, with your respectable family?"

"I believe you, M. Rodin," said Rose-Pompon, casting down her eyes with a timid air. "I lodge with Grandpapa Philemon, and Grandmamma Bacchanal—who is a queen and no mistake."

Rodin had hitherto been seriously uneasy, not knowing in what manner Rose had discovered his real name. But on hearing her mention the Bacchanal Queen, with the information that she lodged in the house, he found something to compensate for the disagreeable incident of Rose-Pompon's appearance. It was, indeed, important to Rodin to find out the Bacchanal Queen, the mistress of Sleepinbuff, and the sister of Mother Bunch, who had been noted as dangerous since her interview with the superior of the convent, and the part she had taken in the projected escape of Mdlle. de Cardoville. Moreover, Rodin hoped—thanks to what he had just heard—to bring Rose-Pompon to confess to him the name of the person from whom she had learned that "Charlemagne" masked "Rodin."

Hardly had the young girl pronounced the name of the Bacchanal Queen, than Rodin clasped his hands, and appeared as much surprised as interested.

"Oh, my dear child," he exclaimed, "I conjure you not

to jest on this subject. Are you speaking of a young girl who bears that nickname, the sister of a deformed needle-woman?"

"Yes, sir, the Bacchanal Queen is her nickname," said Rose-Pompon, astonished in her turn; "she is really Cephyse Soliveau, and she is my friend."

"Oh! she is your friend?" said Rodin, reflecting.

"Yes, sir, my bosom friend."

"So you love her?"

"Like a sister. Poor girl! I do what I can for her, and that's not much. But how comes it that a respectable man of your age should know the Bacchanal Queen?—Ah! that shows you have a false name!"

"My dear child, I am no longer inclined to laugh," said Rodin, with so sorrowful an air, that Rose-Pompon, reproaching herself with her pleasantry, said to him: "But how comes it that you know Cephyse?"

"Alas! I do not know her—but a young fellow, that I like excessively——"

"Jacques Rennepont?"

"Otherwise called Sleepinbuff. He is now in prison for debt," sighed Rodin. "I saw him yesterday."

"You saw him yesterday?—how strange!" said Rose-Pompon, clapping her hands. "Quick! quick!—come over to Philemon's, to give Cephyse news of her lover. She is so uneasy about him."

"My dear child, I should like to give her good news of that worthy fellow, whom I like in spite of his follies, for who has not been guilty of follies?" added Rodin, with indulgent good-nature.

"To be sure," said Rose-Pompon, twisting about as if she still wore the costume of a débardeur.

"I will say more," added Rodin: "I love him because of his follies; for, talk as we may, my dear child, there is always something good at bottom, a good heart, or something, in those who spend generously their money for other people."

"Well, come! you are a very good sort of a man," said Rose-Pompon, enchanted with Rodin's philosophy. "But why will you not come and see Cephyse, and talk to her of Jacques?"

"Of what use would it be to tell her what she knows already—that Jacques is in prison? What I should like, would be to get the worthy fellow out of his scrape."

"Oh, sir! only do that, only get Jacques out of prison,"

cried Rose-Pompon, warmly, "and we will both give you a kiss—me and Cephyse!"

"It would be throwing kisses away, dear little madcap!" said Rodin, smiling. "But be satisfied, I want no reward to induce me to do good when I can."

"Then you hope to get Jacques out of prison?"

Rodin shook his head, and answered with a grieved and disappointed air. "I did hope it. Certainly, I did hope it; but now all is changed."

"How's that?" asked Rose-Pompon, with surprise.

"That foolish joke of calling me M. Rodin may appear very amusing to you, my dear child. I understand it, you being only an echo. Some one has said to you: 'Go and tell M. Charlemagne that he is one M. Rodin. That will be very funny.'"

"Certainly, I should never myself have thought of calling you M. Rodin. One does not invent such names," answered Rose-Pompon.

"Well! that person with his foolish jokes, has done, without knowing it, a great injury to Jacques Rennepont."

"What! because I called you Rodin instead of Charlemagne?" cried Rose-Pompon, much regretting the pleasantry which she had carried on at the instigation of Ninny Moulin. "But really, sir," she added, "what can this joke have to do with the service that you were about to render Jacques?"

"I am not at liberty to tell you, my child. In truth, I am very sorry for poor Jacques. Believe me, I am; but do let me pass."

"Listen to me, sir, I beg," said Rose-Pompon; "if I told you the name of the person who told me to call you Rodin, would you interest yourself again for Jacques?"

"I do not wish to know any one's secrets, my dear child. In all this, you have been the echo of persons who are, perhaps, very dangerous; and, notwithstanding the interest I feel for Jacques Rennepont, I do not wish, you understand, to make myself enemies. Heaven forbid!"

Rose-Pompon did not at all comprehend Rodin's fears, and upon this he had counted; for after a second's reflection, the young girl resumed: "Well, sir—this is too deep for me; I do not understand it. All I know is, that I am truly sorry if I have injured a good young man by a mere joke. I will tell you exactly how it happened. My frankness may be of some use."

"Frankness will often clear up the most obscure matters," said Rodin, sententiously.

"After all," said Rose-Pompon, "it's Ninny's fault. Why does he tell me nonsense, that might injure poor Cephyse's lover? You see, sir, it happened in this way. Ninny Moulin, who is fond of a joke, saw you just now in the street. The portress told him that your name was Charlemagne. He said to me: 'No; his name is Rodin. We must play him a trick. Go to his room, Rose-Pompon, knock at the door, and call him M. Rodin. You will see what a rum face he will make.' I promised Ninny Moulin not to name him; but I do it, rather than run the risk of injuring Jacques."

At Ninny Moulin's name Rodin had not been able to repress a movement of surprise. This pamphleteer, whom he had employed to edit the "Neighborly Love," was not personally formidable; but, being fond of talking in his drink, he might become troublesome, particularly if Rodin, as was probable, had often to visit this house, to execute his project upon Sleepinbuff, through the medium of the Bacchanal Queen. The socius resolved, therefore, to provide against this inconvenience.

"So, my dear child," said he to Rose-Pompon, "it is a M. Desmoulins that persuaded you to play off this silly joke?"

"Not Desmoulins, but Dumoulin," corrected Rose. "He writes in the pewholders' papers, and defends the saints for money; for, if Ninny Moulin is a saint, his patrons are Saint Drinkard and Saint Flashette, as he himself declares."

"This gentleman appears to be very gay."

"Oh! a very good fellow."

"But stop," resumed Rodin, appearing to recollect himself; "ain't he a man about thirty-six or forty, fat, with a ruddy complexion?"

"Ruddy as a glass of red wine," said Rose-Pompon, "and with a pimpled nose like a mulberry."

"That's the man—M. Dumoulin. Oh! in that case, I am quite satisfied, my dear child. The jest no longer makes me uneasy; for M. Dumoulin is a very worthy man—only perhaps a little too fond of his joke."

"Then, sir, you will try to be useful to Jacques? The stupid pleasantry of Ninny Moulin will not prevent you?"

"I hope not."

"But I must not tell Ninny Moulin that you know it was he who sent me to call you M. Rodin—eh, sir?"

"Why not? In every case, my dear child, it is always better to speak frankly the truth."

"But, sir, Ninny Moulin so strongly recommended me not to name him to you——"

"If you have named him, it is from a very good motive; why not avow it? However, my dear child, this concerns you, not me. Do as you think best."

"And may I tell Cephyse of your good intentions towards Jacques?"

"The truth, my dear child, always the truth. One need never hesitate to say what is."

"Poor Cephyse! how happy she will be!" cried Rose-Pompon, cheerfully; "and the news will come just in time."

"Only you must not exaggerate; I do not promise positively to get this good fellow out of prison; I say, that I will do what I can. But what I promise positively is—for, since the imprisonment of poor Jacques, your friend must be very much straitened——"

"Alas, sir!"

"What I promise positively is, some little assistance, which your friend will receive to-day, to enable her to live honestly; and if she behaves well—hereafter—why, hereafter, we shall see."

"Oh, sir! you do not know how welcome will be your assistance to poor Cephyse! One might fancy you were her actual good angel. Faith! you may call yourself Rodin, or Charlemagne; all I know is, that you are a nice, sweet——"

"Come, come, do not exaggerate," said Rodin; "say a good sort of old fellow; nothing more, my dear child. But see how things fall out, sometimes! Who could have told me, when I heard you knock at my door—which, I must say, vexed me a great deal—that it was a pretty little neighbor of mine, who under the pretext of playing off a joke, was to put me in the way of doing a good action? Go and comfort your friend; this evening she will receive some assistance; and let us have hope and confidence. Thanks be, there are still some good people in the world!"

"Oh, sir! you prove it yourself."

"Not at all! The happiness of the old is to see the young happy."

This was said by Rodin with so much apparent kindness, that Rose-Pompon felt the tears well up to her eyes, and answered with much emotion: "Sir, Cephyse and me are only poor girls; there are many more virtuous in the world; but I venture to say, we have good hearts. Now, if ever you should be ill, only send for us; there are no Sisters of Charity that will take better care of you. It is all that we can offer you, without reckoning Philemon, who shall go

through fire and water for you, I give you my word for it—and Cephyse, I am sure, will answer for Jacques also, that he will be yours in life and death."

"You see, my dear child, that I was right in saying—a fitful head and a good heart. Adieu, till we meet again."

Thereupon Rodin, taking up the basket, which he had placed on the ground by the side of his umbrella, prepared to descend the stairs.

"First of all, you must give me this basket; it will be in your way going down," said Rose-Pompon, taking the basket from the hands of Rodin, notwithstanding his resistance. Then she added: "Lean upon my arm. The stairs are so dark. You might slip."

"I will accept your offer, my dear child, for I am not very courageous." Leaning paternally on the right arm of Rose-Pompon, who held the basket in her left hand, Rodin descended the stairs, and crossed the court-yard.

"Up there, on the third story, do you see that big face close to the window-frame?" said Rose-Pompon suddenly to Rodin, stopping in the centre of the little court. "That is my Ninny Moulin. Do you know him? Is he the same as yours?"

"The same as mine, said Rodin, raising his head, and waving his hand very affectionately to Jacques Dumoulin, who, stupefied thereat, retired abruptly from the window.

"The poor fellow! I am sure he is afraid of me since his foolish joke," said Rodin, smiling. "He is very wrong."

And he accompanied these last words with a sinister nipping of the lips, not perceived by Rose-Pompon.

"And now, my dear child," said he, as they both entered the passage, "I no longer need your assistance; return to your friend, and tell her the good news you have heard."

"Yes, sir, you are right. I burn with impatience to tell her what a good man you are." And Rose-Pompon sprung towards the stairs.

"Stop, stop! how about my basket that the little madcap carries off with her" said Rodin.

"Oh, true! I beg your pardon, sir. Poor Cephyse! how pleased she will be. Adieu, sir!" And Rose-Pompon's pretty figure disappeared in the darkness of the staircase, which she mounted with an alert and impatient step.

Rodin issued from the entry. "Here is your basket, my good lady," said he, stopping at the threshold of Mother Arsène's shop. "I give you my humble thanks for your kindness."

"For nothing, my dear sir, for nothing. It is all at your service. Well, was the radish good?"

"Succulent, my dear madame, and excellent."

"Oh! I am glad of it. Shall we soon see you again?"

"I hope so. But could you tell me where is the nearest post-office?"

"Turn to the left, the third house, at the grocer's."

"A thousand thanks."

"I wager it's a love letter for your sweetheart," said Mother Arsène, enlivened probably by Rose-Pompon's and Ninny Moulin's proximity.

"Ha! ha! ha! the good lady!" said Rodin, with a titter. Then, suddenly resuming his serious aspect, he made a low bow to the greengrocer, adding: "Your most obedient, humble servant!" and walked out into the street.

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We now usher the reader into Dr. Baleinier's asylum, in which Mdlle. de Cardoville was confined.

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE ADVICE.

Adrienne de Cardoville had been still more strictly confined in Dr. Baleinier's house, since the double nocturnal attempt of Agricola and Dagobert, in which the soldier, though severely wounded, had succeeded, thanks to the intrepid devotion of his son, seconded by the heroic Spoil-sport, in gaining the little garden gate of the convent, and escaping by way of the boulevard, along with the young smith. Four o'clock had just struck. Adrienne, since the previous day, had been removed to a chamber on the second story of the asylum. The grated window, with closed shutters, only admitted a faint light to this apartment. The young lady, since her interview with Mother Bunch, expected to be delivered any day by the intervention of her friends. But she felt painful uneasiness on the subject of Agricola and Dagobert, being absolutely ignorant of the issue of the struggle in which her intended liberators had been engaged with the people of the asylum and convent. She had in vain questioned her keepers on the subject; they had remained perfectly mute. These new incidents had augmented the bitter

resentment of Adrienne against the Princess de Saint Dizier, Father d'Aigrigny, and their creatures. The slight paleness of Mdlle. de Cardoville's charming face, and her fine eyes a little drooping, betrayed her recent sufferings; seated before a little table, with her forehead resting upon one of her hands, half veiled by the long curls of her golden hair, she was turning over the leaves of a book. Suddenly, the door opened, and M. Baleinier entered. The doctor, a Jesuit, in lay attire, a docile and passive instrument of the will of his Order, was only half in the confidence of Father d'Aigrigny and the Princess de Saint Dizier. He was ignorant of the object of the imprisonment of Mdlle. de Cardoville; he was ignorant also of the sudden change which had taken place in the relative position of Father d'Aigrigny and Rodin, after the reading of the testament of Marius de Rennepont. The doctor had, only the day before, received orders from Father d'Aigrigny (now acting under the directions of Rodin) to confine Mdlle. de Cardoville still more strictly, to act towards her with redoubled severity, and to endeavor to force her, it will be seen by what expedients, to renounce the judicial proceedings, which she promised herself to take hereafter against her persecutors. At sight of the doctor, Mdlle. de Cardoville could not hide the aversion and disdain with which this man inspired her. M. Baleinier, on the contrary, always smiling, always courteous, approached Adrienne with perfect ease and confidence, stopped a few steps from her, as if to study her features more attentively, and then added like a man who is satisfied with the observations he had made: "Come! the unfortunate events of the night before last have had a less injurious influence than I feared. There is some improvement; the complexion is less flushed, the look calmer, the eyes still somewhat too bright, but no longer shining with such unnatural fire. You were getting on so well! Now the cure must be prolonged—for this unfortunate night affair threw you into a state of excitement, that was only the more dangerous from your not being conscious of it. Happily, with care, your recovery will not, I hope, be very much delayed." Accustomed though she was to the audacity of this tool of the Congregation, Mdlle. de Cardoville could not forbear saying to him, with a smile of bitter disdain: "What impudence, sir, there is in your probity! What effrontery in your zeal to earn your hire! Never for a moment do you lay aside your mask; craft and falsehood are ever on your lips. Really, if this shameful comedy causes you as much fatigue as

it does me disgust and contempt, they can never pay you enough."

"Alas!" said the doctor, in a sorrowful tone; "always this unfortunate delusion, that you are not in want of our care!—that I am playing a part, when I talk to you of the sad state in which you were, when we were obliged to bring you hither by stratagem. Still, with the exception of this little sign of rebellious insanity, your condition has marvellously improved. You are on the high-road to a complete cure. By-and-by, your excellent heart will render me the justice that is due to me; and, one day, I shall be judged as I deserve."

"I believe it, sir; the day approaches, in which you *will* be judged as *you* deserve," said Adrienne, laying great stress upon the two words.

"Always that other fixed idea," said the doctor with a sort of commiseration. "Come, be reasonable. Do not think of this childishness."

"What! renounce my intention to demand at the hands of justice reparation for myself, and disgrace for and your accomplices? Never, sir—never!"

"Well!" said the doctor, shrugging his shoulders; "once at liberty, thank heaven, you will have many other things to think of, my fair enemy."

"You forget piously the evil that you do; but I, sir, have a better memory."

"Let us talk seriously. Have you really the intention of applying to the courts?" inquired Dr. Baleinier, in a grave tone.

"Yes, sir, and you know that what I intend, I firmly carry out."

"Well! I can only conjure you not to follow out this idea," replied the doctor, in a still more solemn tone; "I ask it as a favor, in the name of your own interest."

"I think, sir, that you are a little too ready to confound your interest with mine."

"Now come," said Dr. Baleinier, with a feigned impatience, as if quite certain of convincing Mdlle. de Cardoville on the instant; "would you have the melancholy courage to plunge into despair two persons full of goodness and generosity?"

"Only two? The jest would be complete, if you were to reckon three: you, sir, and my aunt, and Abbé d'Aigrigny; for these are no doubt the generous persons in whose name you implore my pity."

"No, madame; I speak neither of myself, nor of your aunt, nor of Abbé d'Aigrigny."

"Of whom, then, sir?" asked Mdlle. de Cardoville with surprise.

"Of two poor fellows, who, no doubt sent by those whom you call your friends, got into the neighboring convent the other night, and thence into this garden. The guns which you heard go off were fired at them."

"Alas! I thought so. They refused to tell me if either of them was wounded," said Adrienne, with painful emotion.

"One of them received a wound, but not very serious, since he was able to fly and escape pursuit."

"Thank God!" cried Mdlle. de Cardoville, clasping her hands with fervor.

"It is quite natural that you should rejoice at their escape, but by what strange contradiction do you now wish to put the officers of justice on their track? A singular manner, truly, of rewarding their devotion!"

"What do you say, sir?" asked Mdlle. de Cardoville.

"For if they should be arrested," resumed Dr. Baleinier, without answering her, "as they have been guilty of housebreaking and attempted burglary, they would be sent to the galleys."

"Heavens! and for my sake!"

"Yes; it would be *for* you, and what is worse, *by* you, that they would be condemned."

"By *me*, sir?"

"Certainly; that is, if you follow up your vengeance against your aunt and Abbé d'Aigrigny—I do not speak of myself, for I am quite safe; in a word, if you persist in laying your complaint before the magistrates, that you have been unjustly confined in this house."

"I do not understand you, sir. Explain yourself," said Adrienne, with growing uneasiness.

"Child that you are!" cried the Jesuit of the short robe, with an air of conviction; "do you think that if the law once takes cognizance of this affair, you can stop short its action where and when you please? When you leave this house, you lodge a complaint against me and against your family; well, what happens? The law interferes, inquires, calls witnesses, enters into the most minute investigations. Then, what follows? Why, that this nocturnal escalade, which the superior of the convent has some interest in hushing up, for fear of scandal—that this nocturnal attempt, I say, which

I also would keep quiet, is necessarily divulged, and as it involves a serious crime, to which a heavy penalty is attached, the law will ferret into it, and find out these unfortunate men, and if, as is probable, they are detained in Paris by their duties or occupations, or even by a false security, arising from the honorable motives which they know to have actuated them, they will be arrested. And who will be the cause of this arrest? You, by your deposition against us."

"Oh, sir! that would be horrible; but it is impossible."

"It is very possible, on the contrary," returned M. Baleinier: "so that, while I and the superior of the convent, who alone are really entitled to complain, only wish to keep quiet this unpleasant affair, it is you—you, for whom these unfortunate men have risked the galleys—that will deliver them up to justice."

Though Mdlle. de Cardoville was not completely duped by the lay Jesuit, she guessed that the merciful intentions which he expressed with regard to Dagobert and his son, would be absolutely subordinate to the course she might take in pressing or abandoning the legitimate vengeance which she meant to claim of authority. Indeed, Rodin, whose instructions the doctor was following without knowing it, was too cunning to have it said to Mdlle. de Cardoville: "If you attempt any proceedings, we denounce Dagobert and his son," but he attained the same end, by inspiring Adrienne with fears on the subject of her two liberators, so as to prevent her taking any hostile measures. Without knowing the exact law on the subject, Mdlle. de Cardoville had too much good sense not to understand, that Dagobert and Agricola might be very seriously involved in consequence of their nocturnal adventure, and might even find themselves in a terrible position. And yet, when she thought of all she had suffered in that house, and of all the just resentment she entertained in the bottom of her heart, Adrienne felt unwilling to renounce the stern pleasure of exposing such odious machinations to the light of day. Dr. Baleinier watched with sullen attention her whom he considered his dupe, for he thought he could divine the cause of the silence and hesitation of Mdlle. de Cardoville.

"But, sir," resumed the latter, unable to conceal her anxiety, "if I were disposed, for whatever reason, to make no complaint, and to forget the wrongs I have suffered, when should I leave this place?"

"I cannot tell; for I do not know when you will be radi-

cally cured," said the doctor, benignantly. "You are in a very good way, but——"

"Still this insolent and stupid acting!" broke forth Mdlle. de Cardoville, interrupting the doctor with indignation. "I ask, and if it must be, I entreat you to tell me how long I am to be shut up in this dreadful house, for I shall leave it some day, I suppose?"

"I hope so, certainly," said the Jesuit of the short robe, with unction; "but when, I am unable to say. Moreover, I must tell you frankly, that every precaution is taken against such attempts as those of the other night; and the most vigorous watch will be maintained, to prevent your communicating with any one. And all this in your own interest, that your poor head may not again be dangerously excited."

"So, sir," said Adrienne, almost terrified, "compared with what awaits me, the last few days have been days of liberty."

"Your interest before everything," answered the doctor, in a fervent tone.

Mdlle. de Cardoville, feeling the impotence of her indignation and despair, heaved a deep sigh, and hid her face in her hands.

At this moment, quick footsteps were heard in the passage, and one of the nurses entered, after having knocked at the door.

"Sir," said she to the doctor, with a frightened air, "there are two gentlemen below, who wish to see you instantly, and the lady also."

Adrienne raised her head hastily; her eyes were bathed in tears.

"What are the names of these persons?" said M. Baleinier, much astonished.

"One of them said to me," answered the nurse: "'Go and inform Dr. Baleinier that I am a magistrate, and that I come on a duty regarding Mdlle. de Cardoville.'"

"A magistrate!" exclaimed the Jesuit of the short robe, growing purple in the face, and unable to hide his surprise and uneasiness.

"Heaven be praised!" cried Adrienne, rising with vivacity, her countenance beaming through her tears with hope and joy; "my friends have been informed in time, and the hour of justice is arrived!"

"Ask these persons to walk up," said Dr. Baleinier, after a moment's reflection. Then, with a still more agitated ex-

pression of countenance, he approached Adrienne with a harsh, and almost menacing air, which contrasted with the habitual placidity of his hypocritical smile, and said to her in a low voice: "Take care, madame! do not rejoice too soon."

"I no longer fear you," answered Mdlle. de Cardoville, with a bright, flashing eye. "M. de Montbron is no doubt returned to Paris, and has been informed in time. He accompanies the magistrate, and comes to deliver me. I pity you, sir—both you and yours," added Adrienne, with an accent of bitter irony.

"Madame," cried M. Baleinier, no longer able to dissemble his growing alarm, "I repeat to you, take care! Remember what I have told you. Your accusations would necessarily involve the discovery of what took place the other night. Beware! the fate of the soldier and his son is in your hands. Recollect they are in danger of the convict's chains."

"Oh! I am not your dupe, sir. You are holding out a covert menace. Have at least the courage to say to me, that, if I complain to the magistrates, you will denounce the soldier and his son."

"I repeat, that, if you make any complaint, those two people are lost," answered the doctor, ambiguously.

Startled by what was really dangerous in the doctor's threats, Adrienne asked: "Sir, if this magistrate questions me, do you think I will tell him a falsehood?"

"You will answer what is true," said M. Baleinier, hastily, in the hope of still attaining his end. "You will answer that you were in so excited a state of mind a few days ago, that it was thought advisable, for your own sake, to bring you hither, without your knowing it. But you are now so much better, that you acknowledge the utility of the measures taken with regard to you. I will confirm these words; for, after all, it is the truth."

"Never!" cried Mdlle. de Cardoville, with indignation; "never will I be the accomplice of so infamous a falsehood; never will I be base enough to justify the indignities that I have suffered!"

"Here is the magistrate," said M. Baleinier, as he caught the sound of approaching footsteps. "Beware!"

The door opened, and, to the indescribable amazement of the doctor, Rodin appeared on the threshold, accompanied by a man dressed in black, with a dignified and severe countenance. In the interest of his projects, and from motives of craft and prudence that will hereafter be known, Rodin

had not informed Father d'Aigrigny, and consequently the doctor, of the unexpected visit he intended to pay to the asylum, accompanied by a magistrate. On the contrary, he had only the day before given orders to M. Baleinier to confine Mdlle. de Cardoville still more strictly. Therefore, imagine the stupor of the doctor when he saw the judicial officer, whose unexpected presence and imposing aspect were otherwise sufficiently alarming, enter the room, accompanied by Rodin, Abbé d'Aigrigny's humble and obscure secretary. From the door, Rodin, who was very shabbily dressed, as usual, pointed out Mdlle. de Cardoville to the magistrate, by a gesture at once respectful and compassionate. Then, while the latter, who had not been able to repress a movement of admiration at sight of the rare beauty of Adrienne, seemed to examine her with as much surprise as interest, the Jesuit modestly receded several steps.

Dr. Baleinier, in his extreme astonishment, hoping to be understood by Rodin, made suddenly several private signals, as if to interrogate him on the cause of the magistrate's visit. But this was only productive of fresh amazement to M. Baleinier; for Rodin did not appear to recognize him, or to understand his expressive pantomime, and looked at him with affected bewilderment. At length, as the doctor, growing impatient, redoubled his mute questionings, Rodin advanced with a stride, stretched forward his crooked neck, and said, in a loud voice: "What is your pleasure, doctor?"

These words, which completely disconcerted Baleinier, broke the silence which had reigned for some seconds, and the magistrate turned round. Rodin added, with imperturbable coolness: "Since our arrival, the doctor has been making all sorts of mysterious signs to me. I suppose he has something private to communicate, but, as I have no secrets, I must beg him to speak out loud."

This reply, so embarrassing for M. Baleinier, uttered in a tone of aggression, and with an air of icy coldness, plunged the doctor into such new and deep amazement, that he remained for some moments without answering. No doubt the magistrate was struck with this incident, and with the silence which followed it, for he cast a look of great severity on the doctor. Mdlle. de Cardoville, who had expected to have seen M. de Montbron, was also singularly surprised.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE ACCUSER.

BALEINIER, disconcerted for a moment by the unexpected presence of a magistrate, and by Rodin's inexplicable attitude, soon recovered his presence of mind, and addressing his colleague of the longer robe, said to him: "If I make signs to you, sir, it was that, while I wished to respect the silence which this gentleman"—glancing at the magistrate—"has preserved since his entrance, I desired to express my surprise at the unexpected honor of this visit."

"It is to the lady that I will explain the reason for my silence, and beg her to excuse it," replied the magistrate, as he made a half-bow to Adrienne, whom he thus continued to address: "I have just received so serious a declaration with regard to you, madame, that I could not forbear looking at you for a moment in silence, to see if I could read in your countenance or in your attitude, the truth or falsehood of the accusation that has been placed in my hands; and I have every reason to believe that it is but too well founded."

"May I at length be informed sir," said Dr. Baleinier, in a polite but firm tone, "to whom I have the honor of speaking?"

"Sir, I am juge d'instruction, and I have come to inform myself as to a fact which has been pointed out to me——"

"Will you do me the honor to explain yourself, sir?" said the doctor, bowing.

"Sir," resumed the magistrate, M. de Gernande, a man of about fifty years of age, full of firmness and straightforwardness, and knowing how to unite the austere duties of his position with benevolent politeness, "you are accused of having committed—a very great error, not to use a harsher expression. As for the nature of that error, I prefer believing, sir, that you (a first rate man of science) may have been deceived in the calculation of a medical case, rather than suspect you of having forgotten all that is sacred in the exercise of a profession that is almost a priesthood."

"When you specify the facts, sir," answered the Jesuit of the short robe, with a degree of haughtiness, "it will be easy for me to prove that my reputation as a man of science

is no less free from reproach, than my conscience as a man of honor."

"Madame," said M. de Gernande, addressing Adrienne, "is it true that you were conveyed to this house by stratagem?"

"Sir," cried M. Baleinier, "permit me to observe, that the manner in which you open this question is an insult to me."

"Sir, it is to the lady that I have the honor of addressing myself," replied M. de Gernande, sternly; "and I am the sole judge of the propriety of *my* questions."

Adrienne was about to answer affirmatively to the magistrate, when an expressive look from Dr. Baleinier reminded her that she would perhaps expose Dagobert and his son to cruel dangers. It was no base and vulgar feeling of vengeance by which Adrienne was animated, but a legitimate indignation, inspired by odious hypocrisy. She would have thought it cowardly not to unmask the criminals; but wishing to avoid compromising others, she said to the magistrate, with an accent full of mildness and dignity: "Permit me, sir, in my turn, rather to ask you a question."

"Speak, madame."

"Will the answer I make be considered a formal accusation?"

"I have come hither, madame, to ascertain the truth, and no consideration should induce you to dissemble it."

"So be it, sir," resumed Adrienne; "but suppose, having just causes of complaint, I lay them before you, in order to be allowed to leave this house, shall I afterwards be at liberty not to press the accusations I have made?"

"You may abandon proceedings, madame, but the law will take up your cause in the name of society, if its rights have been injured in your person."

"Shall I then not be allowed to pardon? Should I not be sufficiently avenged by a contemptuous forgetfulness of the wrongs I have suffered?"

"Personally, madame, you may forgive and forget; but I have the honor to repeat to you, that society cannot show the same indulgence, if it should turn out that you have been the victim of a criminal machination—and I have every reason to fear it is so. The manner in which you express yourself, the generosity of your sentiments, the calmness and dignity of your attitude, convince me that I have been well informed."

"I hope, sir," said Dr. Baleinier, recovering his coolness,

"that you will at least communicate the declaration that has been made to you."

"It has been declared to me, sir," said the magistrate, in a stern voice, "that Mdlle. de Cardoville was brought here by stratagem."

"By stratagem?"

"Yes, sir."

"It is true. The lady *was* brought here by stratagem," answered the Jesuit of the short robe, after a moment's silence.

"You confess it, then?" said M. de Gernande.

"Certainly I do, sir. I admit that I had recourse to means which we are unfortunately too often obliged to employ, when persons who most need our assistance are unconscious of their own sad state."

"But, sir," replied the magistrate, "it has also been declared to me, that Mdlle. de Cardoville never required such aid."

"That, sir, is a question of medical jurisprudence, which has to be examined and discussed," said M. Baleinier, recovering his assurance.

"It will, indeed, sir, be seriously discussed; for you are accused of confining Mdlle. de Cardoville, while in the full possession of all her faculties."

"And may I ask you for what purpose?" said M. de Baleinier, with a slight shrug of the shoulders, and in a tone of irony. "What interest had I to commit such a crime, even admitting that my reputation did not place me above so odious and absurd a charge?"

"You are said to have acted, sir, in furtherance of a family plot, devised against Mdlle. de Cardoville for a pecuniary motive."

"And who has dared, sir, to make so calumnious a charge?" cried Dr. Baleinier, with indignant warmth. "Who has had the audacity to accuse a respectable, and I dare to say, respected man, of having been the accomplice in such infamy?"

"I," said Rodin, coldy.

"You!" cried Dr. Baleinier, falling back two steps, as if thunderstruck.

"Yes, I accuse you," repeated Rodin, in a clear sharp voice.

"Yes, it was this gentleman who came to me this morning, with ample proofs, to demand my interference in favor of Mdlle. de Cardoville," said the magistrate, drawing back

a little, to give Adrienne the opportunity of seeing her defender.

Throughout this scene, Rodin's name had not hitherto been mentioned. Mdlle. de Cardoville had often heard speak of the Abbé d'Aigrigny's secretary in no very favorable terms; but, never having seen him, she did not know that her liberator was this very Jesuit. She therefore looked towards him, with a glance in which were mingled curiosity, interest, surprise and gratitude. Rodin's cadaverous countenance, his repulsive ugliness, his sordid dress, would a few days before have occasioned Adrienne a perhaps invincible feeling of disgust. But the young lady, remembering how the sempstress, poor, feeble, deformed, and dressed almost in rags, was endowed, notwithstanding her wretched exterior, with one of the noblest and most admirable hearts, recalled this recollection in favor of the Jesuit. She forgot that he was ugly and sordid, only to remember that he was old, that he seemed poor, and that he had come to her assistance. Dr. Baleinier, notwithstanding his craft, notwithstanding his audacious hypocrisy, in spite even of his presence of mind, could not conceal how much he was disturbed by Rodin's denunciation. His head became troubled as he remembered how, on the first day of Adrienne's confinement in this house, the implacable appeal of Rodin, through the hole in the door, had prevented him (Baleinier) from yielding to emotions of pity, inspired by the despair of this unfortunate young girl, driven almost to doubt of her own reason. And yet it was this very Rodin, so cruel, so inexorable, the devoted agent of Father d'Aigrigny, who denounced him (Baleinier), and brought a magistrate to set Adrienne at liberty--when, only the day before, Father d'Aigrigny had ordered an increase of severity towards her!

The lay Jesuit felt persuaded that Rodin was betraying Father d'Aigrigny in the most shameful manner, and that Mdlle. de Cardoville's friends had bribed and bought over this scoundrelly secretary. Exasperated by what he considered a monstrous piece of treachery, the doctor exclaimed, in a voice broken with rage: "And it is you, sir, that have the impudence to accuse me—you, who only a few days ago——"

Then, reflecting that the retort upon Rodin would be self-accusation, he appeared to give way to an excess of emotion, and resumed with bitterness: "Ah, sir, you are the last person that I should have thought capable of this odious denunciation. It is shameful!"

"And who had a better right than I to denounce this infamy?" answered Rodin, in a rude, overbearing tone. "Was I not in a position to learn—unfortunately, too late—the nature of the conspiracy of which Mdlle. de Cardoville and others have been the victims? Then, what was my duty as an honest man? Why, to inform the magistrate, to prove what I set forth, and to accompany him hither. That is what I have done."

"So, sir," said the doctor, addressing the magistrate, "it is not only myself that this man accuses, but he dares also——"

"I accuse the Abbé d'Aigrigny," resumed Rodin, in a still louder and more imperative tone, interrupting the doctor, "I accuse the Princess de Saint-Dizier, I accuse you, sir—of having, from a vile motive of self-interest, confined Mdlle. de Cardoville in this house, and the two daughters of Marshal Simon in the neighboring convent. Is that clear?"

"Alas! it is only too true," said Adrienne, hastily. "I have seen those poor children all in tears, making signs of distress to me."

The accusation of Rodin, with regard to the orphans, was a new and fearful blow for Dr. Baleinier. He felt perfectly convinced that the traitor had passed clear over to the enemy's camp. Wishing therefore to put an end to this embarrassing scene, he tried to put a good face on the matter, in spite of his emotion, and said to the magistrate: "I might confine myself, sir, to silence—disdaining to answer such accusations, till a judicial decision had given them some kind of authority. But, strong in a good conscience I address myself to Mdlle. de Cardoville, and I beg her to say if this very morning I did not inform her, that her health would soon be sufficiently restored to allow her to leave this house. I conjure her, in the name of her well-known love of truth to state if such was not my language, when I was alone with her——"

"Come, sir!" said Rodin, interrupting Baleinier with an insolent air; "suppose that, from pure generosity, this dear young lady were to admit as much—what will it prove in your favor?—why, nothing at all."

"What, sir," cried the doctor, "do you presume——"

"I presume to unmask you, without asking your leave. What have you just told us? Why, that being alone with Mdlle. de Cardoville, you talked to her as if she were really mad. How very conclusive!"

"But, sir——" cried the doctor.

"But, sir," resumed Rodin, without allowing him to continue, "it is evident that, foreseeing the possibility of what has occurred to-day, and, to provide yourself with a hole to creep out at, you have pretended to believe your own execrable falsehood, in presence of this poor young lady, that you might afterwards call in aid the evidence of your own assumed conviction. Come, sir! such stories will not go down with people of common sense or common humanity."

"Come now, sir!" exclaimed Baleinier, angrily.

"Well, sir," resumed Rodin, in a still louder voice, which completely drowned that of the doctor; "is it true, or is it not, that you have recourse to the mean evasion of ascribing this odious imprisonment to a scientific error? I affirm that you do so, and that you think yourself safe, because you can now say: "Thanks to my care, the young lady has recovered her reason. What more would you have?"'

"Yes, I do say that, sir, and I maintain it."

"You maintain a falsehood; for it is proven that the lady never lost her reason for a moment."

"But I, sir, maintain that she did lose it."

"And I, sir, will prove the contrary," said Rodin.

"You? How will you do that?" cried the doctor.

"That I shall take care not to tell you at present, as you may well suppose," answered Rodin, with an ironical smile, adding with indignation: "But, really, sir, you ought to die for shame, to dare to raise such a question in presence of the lady. You should at least have spared her this discussion."

"Sir!"

"Oh, fie, sir! I say, fie! It is odious to maintain this argument before her—odious if you speak truth, doubly odious if you lie," said Rodin, with disgust.

"This violence is inconceivable!" cried the Jesuit of the short robe, exasperated; "and I think the magistrate shows great partiality in allowing such gross calumnies to be heaped upon me!"

"Sir," answered M. de Gernande, severely, "I am entitled not only to hear, but to provoke any contradictory discussion that may enlighten me in the execution of my duty; it results from all this, that, even in your opinion, sir, Mdlle. de Cardoville's health is sufficiently good to allow her to return home immediately."

"At least, I do not see any very serious inconvenience

likely to arise from it, sir," said the doctor: "only I maintain that the cure is not so complete as it might have been, and, on this subject, I decline all responsibility for the future."

"You can do so, safely," said Rodin; "it is not likely that the young lady will ever again have recourse to your honest assistance."

"It is useless, therefore, to employ my official authority, to demand the immediate liberation of Mdlle. de Cardoville," said the magistrate.

"She is free," said Baleinier, "perfectly free."

"As for the question whether you have imprisoned her on the plea of a supposititious madness, the law will inquire into it, sir, and you will be heard."

"I am quite easy, sir," answered M. Baleinier, trying to look so; "my conscience reproaches me with nothing."

"I hope it may turn out well, sir," said M. de Gernande. "However bad appearances may be, more especially when persons of your station in society are concerned, we should always wish to be convinced of their innocence." Then, turning to Adrienne, he added: "I understand, madame, how painful this scene must be to all your feelings of delicacy and generosity; hereafter, it will depend upon yourself, either to proceed for damages against M. Baleinier, or to let the law take its course. One word more. The bold and upright man"—here the magistrate pointed to Rodin—"who has taken up your cause in so frank and disinterested a manner, expressed a belief that you would, perhaps, take charge for the present of Marshal Simon's daughters, whose liberation I am about to demand from the convent where they also are confined by stratagem."

"The fact is, sir," replied Adrienne, "that, as soon as I learned the arrival of Marshal Simon's daughters in Paris, my intention was to offer them apartments in my house. These young ladies are my near relations. It is at once a duty and a pleasure for me to treat them as sisters. I shall, therefore, be doubly grateful to you, sir, if you will trust them to my care."

"I think that I cannot serve them better," answered M. de Gernande. Then, addressing Baleinier, he added, "Will you consent, sir, to my bringing these two ladies hither? I will go and fetch them, while Mdlle. de Cardoville prepares for her departure. They will then be able to leave this house with their relation."

"I entreat the lady to make use of this house as her own,

until she leaves it," replied M. Baleinier. "My carriage shall be at her orders to take her home."

"Madame," said the magistrate, approaching Adrienne, "without prejudging the question, which must soon be decided by a court of law, I may at least regret that I was not called in sooner. Your situation must have been a very cruel one."

"There will at least remain to me, sir, from this mournful time," said Adrienne, with graceful dignity, "one precious and touching remembrance—that of the interest which you have shown me. I hope that you will one day permit me to thank you, at my own home, not for the justice you have done me, but for the benevolent and paternal manner in which you have done it. And moreover, sir," added Mdlle. de Cardoville, with a sweet smile, "I should like to prove to you, that what they call my cure is complete."

M. de Gernande bowed respectfully in reply. During the short dialogue of the magistrate with Adrienne, their backs were both turned to Baleinier and Rodin. The latter, profiting by this moment's opportunity, hastily slipped into the doctor's hand a note just written with a pencil in the bottom of his hat. Baleinier looked at Rodin in stupefied amazement. But the latter made a peculiar sign, by raising his thumb to his forehead, and drawing it twice across his brow. Then he remained impassible. This had passed so rapidly, that when M. de Gernande turned round, Rodin was at a distance of several steps from Dr. Baleinier, and looking at Mdlle. de Cardoville with respectful interest.

"Permit me to accompany you, sir," said the doctor, preceding the magistrate, whom Mdlle. de Cardoville saluted with much affability. Then both went out, and Rodin remained alone with the young lady.

After conducting M. de Gernande to the outer door of the house, M. Baleinier made haste to read the pencil-note written by Rodin; it ran as follows: "The magistrate is going to the convent, by way of the street. Run round by the garden, and tell the Superior to obey the order I have given with regard to the two young girls. It is of the utmost importance."

The peculiar sign which Rodin had made, and the tenor of this note, proved to Dr. Baleinier, who was passing from surprise to amazement, that the secretary, far from betraying the reverend father, was still acting for the Greater Glory of the Lord. However, whilst he obeyed the orders, M. Baleinier sought in vain to penetrate the motives of Rodin's inexplicable conduct, who had himself informed the

authorities of an affair that was to have been hushed up, and that might have the most disastrous consequences for Father d'Aigrigny, Madame de Saint-Dizier, and Baleinier himself. But let us return to Rodin, left alone with Mdlle. de Cardoville.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

FATHER D'AIGRIGNY'S SECRETARY.

HARDLY had the magistrate and Dr. Baleinier disappeared, than Mdlle. de Cardoville, whose countenance was beaming with joy, exclaimed, as she looked at Rodin with a mixture of respect and gratitude, "At length, thanks to you, sir, I am free—free! Oh, I had never before felt how much happiness, expansion, delight, there is in that adorable word—liberty!"

Her bosom rose and fell, her rosy nostrils dilated, her vermilion lips were half open, as if she again inhaled with rapture pure and vivifying air.

"I have been only a few days in this horrible place," she resumed, "but I have suffered enough from my captivity to make me resolve never to let a year pass without restoring to liberty some poor prisoners for debt. This vow no doubt appears to belong a little to the Middle Ages," added she, with a smile; "but I would fain borrow from that noble epoch something more than its old windows and furniture. So, doubly thanks, sir!—for I take you as a partner in that project of deliverance, which has just (you see) unfolded itself in the midst of the happiness I owe to you, and by which you seem so much affected. Oh! let my joy speak my gratitude, and pay you for your generous aid!" exclaimed the young girl with enthusiasm.

Mdlle. de Cardoville had truly remarked a complete transfiguration in the countenance of Rodin. This man, lately so harsh, severe, inflexible, with regard to Dr. Baleinier, appeared now under the influence of the mildest and most tender sentiments. His little, half-veiled eyes were fixed upon Adrienne with an expression of ineffable interest. Then, as if he wished to tear himself from these impressions, he said, speaking to himself, "Come, come, no weakness. Time is too precious; my mission is not fulfilled. My dear young lady," added he, addressing himself to Adrienne, "believe what I say—we will talk hereafter of gratitude—but we have

now to talk of the present so important for you and your family. Do you know what is taking place?"

Adrienne looked at the Jesuit with surprise, and said "What is taking place, sir?"

"Do you know the real motive of your imprisonment in this house? Do you know what influenced the Princess de Saint-Dizier and Abbé d'Aigrigny?"

At the sound of those detested names, Mdlle. de Cardoville's face, now so full of happiness, became suddenly sad, and she answered with bitterness, "It is hatred, sir, that no doubt animated Madame de Saint-Dizier against me."

"Yes, hatred; and, moreover, the desire to rob you with impunity of an immense fortune."

"Me, sir! how?"

"You must be ignorant, my dear young lady, of the interest you had to be in the Rue Saint-François on the 13th February, for an inheritance?"

"I was ignorant, sir, of the date and details: but I knew by some family papers, and thanks to an extraordinary circumstance, that one of our ancestors——"

"Had left an enormous sum to be divided between his descendants; is it not so?"

"Yes, sir."

"But what unfortunately you did not know, my dear young lady, was that the heirs were all bound to be present at a certain hour on the 13th February. This day and hour once past, the absent would forfeit their claim. Do you now understand why you have been imprisoned here, my dear young lady?"

"Yes, yes; I understand it," cried Mdlle. de Cardoville; "cupidity was added to the hatred which my aunt felt for me. All is explained. Marshal Simon's daughters, having the same right as I had, have, like me, been imprisoned."

"And yet," cried Rodin, "you and they were not the only victims."

"Who, then, are the others, sir?"

"A young East Indian."

"Prince Djalma?" said Adrienne, hastily.

"For the same reason he has been nearly poisoned with a narcotic."

"Great God!" cried the young girl, clasping her hands in horror. "It is fearful. That young prince, who was said to have so noble and generous a character! But I had sent to Cardoville Castle——"

"A confidential person, to fetch the prince to Paris—I

know it, my dear young lady; but, by means of a trick, your friend was got out of the way, and the young Oriental delivered to his enemies."

"And where is he now?"

"I have only vague information on the subject. I know that he is in Paris, and do not despair of finding him. I shall pursue my researches with an almost paternal ardor, for we cannot too much love the rare qualities of that poor king's son. What a heart, my dear young lady! what a heart! Oh, it is a heart of gold, pure and bright as the gold of his country!"

"We must find the prince, sir," said Adrienne with emotion; "let me entreat you to neglect nothing for that end. He is my relation—alone here—without support—without assistance."

"Certainly," replied Rodin, with commiseration. "Poor boy!—for he is almost a boy—eighteen or nineteen years of age—thrown into the heart of Paris, of this hell—with his fresh, ardent, half-savage passions—with his simplicity and confidence—to what perils may he not be exposed?"

"Well, we must first find him, sir," said Adrienne, hastily; "and then we will save him from these dangers. Before I was confined here, I learned his arrival in France, and sent a confidential person to offer him the services of an unknown friend. I now see that this mad idea, with which I have been so much reproached, was a very sensible one. I am more convinced of it than ever. The prince belongs to my family, and I owe him a generous hospitality. I had destined for him the lodge I occupied at my aunt's."

"And you, my dear young lady?"

"To-day, I shall remove to a house, which I had prepared some time ago, with the determination of quitting Madame de Saint-Dizier, and living alone as I pleased. Then, sir, as you seem bent upon being the good genius of our family, be as generous with regard to Prince Djalma, as you have been to me and Marshal Simon's daughters. I entreat you to discover the hiding-place of this poor king's son, as you call him; keep my secret for me, and conduct him to the house offered by the unknown friend. Let him not disquiet himself about anything; all his wants shall be provided for; he shall live—like a prince."

"Yes; he will indeed live like a prince, thanks to your royal munificence. But never was such kind interest better deserved. It is enough to see (as I have seen) his fine, melancholy countenance——"

"You have seen him, then, sir?" said Adrienne, interrupting Rodin.

"Yes, my dear young lady; I was with him for about two hours. It was quite enough to judge of him. His charming features are the mirror of his soul."

"And where did you see him, sir?"

"At your old Château de Cardoville, my dear young lady, near which he had been shipwrecked in a storm, and whither I had gone to——" Rodin hesitated for a moment, and then, as if yielding to the frankness of his disposition, added: "Whither I had gone to commit a bad action—a shameful, miserable action, I must confess!"

"You, sir?—at Cardoville House—to commit a bad action?" cried Adrienne, much surprised.

"Alas! yes, my dear young lady," answered Rodin with simplicity. "In one word, I had orders from Abbé d'Aigrigny, to place your former bailiff in the alternative either of losing his situation or lending himself to a mean action—something, in fact, that resembled spying and calumny; but the honest, worthy man refused."

"Why, who are you, sir?" said Mdlle. de Cardoville, more and more astonished.

"I am Rodin, lately secretary of the Abbe d'Aigrigny—a person of very little importance, as you see."

It is impossible to describe the accent, at once humble and ingenuous, of the Jesuit, as he pronounced these words, which he accompanied with a respectful bow. On this revelation, Mdlle. de Cardoville drew back abruptly. We have said that Adrienne had sometimes heard talk of Rodin, the humble secretary of the Abbé d'Aigrigny, as a sort of obedient and passive machine. That was not all; the bailiff of Cardoville Manor, writing to Adrienne on the subject of Prince Djalma, had complained of the perfidious and dishonest propositions of Rodin. She felt, therefore, a vague suspicion, when she heard that her liberator was the man who had played so odious a part. Yet this unfavorable feeling was balanced by the sense of what she owed to Rodin, and by his frank denunciation of Abbé d'Aigrigny before the magistrate. And then the Jesuit, by his own confession, had anticipated, as it were, the reproaches that might have been addressed to him. Still, it was with a kind of cold reserve that Mdlle. de Cardoville resumed this dialogue, which she had commenced with as much frankness as warmth and sympathy.

Rodin perceived the impression he had made. He ex

pected it. He was not the least disconcerted when Mdlle. de Cardoville said to him, as she fixed upon him a piercing glance, "Ah! you are M. Rodin—secretary to the Abbé d'Aigrigny?"

"Say ex-secretary, if you please, my dear young lady," answered the Jesuit; "for you see clearly that I can never again enter the house of the Abbé d'Aigrigny. I have made of him an implacable enemy, and I am now without employment—but no matter—nay, so much the better—since, at this price, the wicked are unmasked, and honest people rescued."

These words, spoken with much simplicity, and dignity, revived a feeling of pity in Adrienne's heart. She thought within herself that, after all, the poor old man spoke the truth. Abbé d'Aigrigny's hate, after this exposure, would be inexorable, and Rodin had braved it for the sake of a generous action.

Still Mdlle. de Cardoville answered coldly, "Since you knew, sir, that the propositions you were charged to make to the bailiff of Cardoville were shameful and perfidious, how could you undertake the mission?"

"How?" replied Rodin, with a sort of painful impatience; "why, because I was completely under Abbé d'Aigrigny's charm, one of the most prodigiously clever men I have ever known, and, as I only discovered the day before yesterday, one of the most prodigiously dangerous men there is in the world. He had conquered my scruples, by persuading me that the End justifies the Means. I must confess that the end he seemed to propose to himself was great and beautiful; but the day before yesterday I was cruelly undeceived. I was awakened, as it were, by a thunder-peal. Oh, my dear young lady!" added Rodin, with a sort of embarrassment and confusion, "let us talk no more of my fatal journey to Cardoville. Though I was only an ignorant and blind instrument, I feel as ashamed and grieved at it as if I had acted for myself. It weighs upon me, it oppresses me. I entreat you, let us speak rather of yourself, and of what interests you—for the soul expands with generous thoughts, even as the breast is dilated in pure and healthful air."

Rodin had confessed his fault so spontaneously, he explained it so naturally, he appeared to regret it so sincerely, that Adrienne, whose suspicions had no other grounds, felt her distrust a good deal diminished.

"So," she resumed, still looking attentively at Rodin, "it was at Cardoville that you saw Prince Djalma?"

"Yes, madame; and my affection for him dates from that interview. Therefore I will accomplish my task. Be satisfied, my dear young lady; like you, like Marshal Simon's daughters, the prince shall avoid being the victim of this detestable plot, which unhappily does not stop there."

"And who besides, then, is threatened?"

"M. Hardy, a man full of honor and probity, who is also your relation, and interested in this inheritance, but kept away from Paris by infamous treachery. And another heir, an unfortunate artisan, who, falling into a trap cleverly baited, has been thrown into a prison for debt."

"But, sir," said Adrienne, suddenly, "for whose advantage was this abominable plot, which really alarms me, first devised?"

"For the advantage of Abbé d'Aigrigny," answered Rodin.

"How, and by what right! Was he also an heir?"

"It would take too long to explain it to you, my dear young lady. You will know all one day. Only be convinced that your family has no more bitter enemy than Abbé d'Aigrigny."

"Sir," said Adrienne, giving way to one last suspicion, "I will speak frankly to you. How can I have deserved the interest that you seem to take in me, and that you even extend to all the members of my family?"

"My dear young lady," answered Rodin, with a smile, "were I to tell you the cause, you would only laugh at, or misapprehend me."

"Speak, I beg of you, sir. Do not mistrust me or yourself."

"Well, then, I became interested in you—devoted to you—because your heart is generous, your mind lofty, your character independent and proud. Once attached to you, those of your race, who are indeed themselves worthy of interest, were no longer indifferent to me. To serve them was to serve you also."

"But, sir—admitting that you suppose me worthy of the too flattering praises you bestow upon me—how could you judge of my heart, my mind, my character?"

"I will tell you, my dear young lady; but first I must make another confession, that fills me with shame. If you were not even so wonderfully endowed, what you have suffered in this house should suffice to command the interest of every honest man—don't you think so?"

"I do think it should, sir."

"I might thus explain the interest I feel in you. But no—I confess it—that would not have sufficed with me. Had you been only Mdlle. de Cardoville—a rich, noble, beautiful young lady—I should doubtless have pitied your misfortune; but I should have said to myself, 'This poor young lady is certainly much to be pitied; but what can I, poor man, do in it? My only resource is my post of secretary to the Abbé d'Aigrigny, and he would be the first that must be attacked. He is all-powerful, and I am nothing. To engage in a struggle with him would be to ruin myself, without the hope of saving this unfortunate person.' But when I learnt what you were, my dear young lady, I revolted, in spite of my inferiority. 'No,' I said, 'a thousand times, no! So fine an intellect, so great a heart, shall not be the victims of an abominable plot. I may perish in the struggle, but I will at least make the attempt.'"

No words can paint the mixture of delicacy, energy, and sensibility with which Rodin uttered these sentiments. As it often happens with people singularly repulsive and ill-favored, if they can once bring you to forget their ugliness, their very deformity becomes a source of interest and commiseration, and you say to yourself, "What a pity that such a mind, such a soul, should inhabit so poor a body!"—and you are touched and softened by the contrast.

It was thus that Mdlle. de Cardoville began to look upon Rodin. He had shown himself as simple and affectionate towards her as he had been brutal and insolent to Dr. Baleinier. One thing only excited the lively curiosity of Mdlle. de Cardoville—she wished to know how Rodin had conceived the devotion and admiration which she seemed to inspire.

"Forgive my indiscreet and obstinate curiosity, sir, but I wish to know——"

"How you were morally revealed to me—is it not so? Oh, my dear young lady! nothing is more simple. I will explain it to you in two words. The Abbé d'Aigrigny saw in me nothing but a writing-machine, an obtuse, mute, blind instrument——"

"I thought M. d'Aigrigny had more penetration."

"And you are right, my dear young lady; he is a man of unparalleled sagacity; but I deceived him by affecting more than simplicity. Do not, therefore, think me false. No; I am proud in my manner—and my pride consists in never appearing above my position, however subaltern it may be! Do you know why? It is that, however haughty may

be my superiors, I can say to myself, 'They do not know my value. It is the inferiority of my condition, not me, that they humiliate.' By this I gain doubly—my self-love is spared, and I hate no one."

"Yes, I understand that sort of pride," said Adrienne, more and more struck with Rodin's original turn of mind.

"But let us return to what concerns you, my dear young lady. On the eve of the 13th of February, the Abbé d'Aigrigny delivered to me a paper in shorthand, and said to me, 'Transcribe this examination; you may add that it is to support the decision of a family council, which has declared, in accordance with the report of Dr. Baleinier, the state of mind of Mdlle. de Cardoville to be sufficiently alarming to render it necessary to confine her in a lunatic asylum.'"

"Yes," said Adrienne, with bitterness; "it related to a long interview, which I had with the Princess de Saint-Dizier, my aunt, and which was taken down without my knowledge."

"Behold me, then, poring over my shorthand report, and beginning to transcribe it. At the end of the first ten lines, I was struck with stupor. I knew not if I were awake or dreaming. 'What! mad?' They must be themselves insane who dare assert so monstrous a proposition!—More and more interested, I continued my reading—I finished it—Oh! then, what shall I say? What I felt, my dear young lady, it is impossible to express. It was sympathy, delight, enthusiasm!"

"Sir," said Adrienne.

"Yes, my dear young lady, enthusiasm! Let not the words shock your modesty. Know that these ideas, so new, so independent, so courageous which you expressed to your aunt with so much brilliancy, are, without your being aware of it, common to you and another person, for whom you will one day feel the most tender and religious respect."

"Of whom do you speak, sir?" cried Mdlle. de Cardoville, more and more interested.

After a moment's apparent hesitation, Rodin resumed, "No, no—it is useless now to inform you of it. All I can tell you, my dear young lady, is that, when I had finished my reading, I ran to Abbé d'Aigrigny's, to convince him of the error into which he had fallen with regard to you. I was impossible then to find him; but yesterday morning I told him plainly what I thought. He only appeared surprised to find that I could think at all. He received my communications with contemptuous silence. I thought him

deceived; I continued my remonstrances, but quite in vain. He ordered me to follow him to the house, where the testament of your ancestor was to be opened. I was so blind with regard to the Abbé d'Aigrigny, that it required the successive arrivals of the soldier, of his son, and of Marshal Simon's father, to open my eyes thoroughly. Their indignation unveiled to me the extent of a conspiracy, plotted long ago, and carried on with terrible ability. Then, I understood why you were confined here as a lunatic; why the daughters of Marshal Simon were imprisoned in a convent. Then a thousand recollections returned to my mind; fragments of letters and statements, which had been given me to copy or decipher, and of which I had never been able to find the explanation, put me on the track of this odious machination. To express then and there the sudden horror I felt at these crimes, would have been to ruin all. I did not make this mistake. I opposed cunning to cunning; I appeared even more eager than Abbé d'Aigrigny. Had this immense inheritance been destined for me alone, I could not have shown myself more grasping and merciless. Thanks to this stratagem, Abbé d'Aigrigny had no suspicion. A providential accident having rescued the inheritance from his hands, he left the house in a state of profound consternation. For my part, I felt indescribable joy; for I had now the means of saving and avenging you, my dear young lady. As usual, I went yesterday evening to my place of business. During the absence of the abbé, it was easy for me to peruse the correspondence relative to the inheritance. In this way I was able to unite all the threads of this immense plot. Oh! then, my dear young lady, I remained, struck with horror, in presence of the discoveries that I made, and that I never should have made under any other circumstances."

"What discoveries, sir?"

"There are some secrets which are terrible to those who possess them. Do not ask me to explain, my dear young lady; but, in this examination, the league formed against you and your relations, from motives of insatiable cupidity, appeared to me in all its dark audacity. Thereupon, the lively and deep interest which I already felt for you, my dear young lady, was augmented greatly, and extended itself to the other innocent victims of this infernal conspiracy. In spite of my weakness, I determined to risk all, to unmask the Abbé d'Aigrigny. I collected the necessary proofs, to give my declaration before the magistrate the needful authority; and, this morning, I left the abbé's house

without revealing to him my projects. He might have employed some violent method to detain me; yet it would have been cowardly to attack him without warning. Once out of his house, I wrote to him, that I had in my hands proofs enough of his crimes, to attack him openly in the face of day. I would accuse, and he must defend himself. I went directly to a magistrate, and you know the rest."

At this juncture, the door opened, and one of the nurses appeared, and said to Rodin: "Sir, the messenger that you and the magistrate sent to the Rue Brise-Miche has just come back."

"Has he left the letter?"

"Yes, sir; and it was taken upstairs directly."

"Very well. Leave us!" The nurse went out.

CHAPTER XXXV.

SYMPATHY.

If it had been possible for Mdlle. de Cardoville to harbor any suspicion of the sincerity of Rodin's devotion, it must have given way before this reasoning, unfortunately so simple and undeniable. How could she suppose the faintest complicity between the Abbé d'Aigrigny and his secretary, when it was the latter who completely unveiled the machinations of his master, and exposed them to the tribunals? when in this, Rodin went even further than Mdlle. de Cardoville would herself have gone? Of what secret design could she suspect the Jesuit? At worst, of a desire to earn by his services the profitable patronage of the young lady. And then, had he not just now protested against this supposition, by declaring his devotion, not to Mdlle. de Cardoville—not to the fair, rich, noble lady—but to the high-souled and generous girl? Finally, as Rodin had said himself, could any but a miserable wretch fail to be interested in Adrienne's fate? A strange mixture of curiosity, surprise, and interest, was joined with Mdlle. de Cardoville's feelings of gratitude towards Rodin. Yet, as she recognized the superior mind under that humble exterior, she was suddenly struck with a grave suspicion. "Sir," said she to Rodin, "I always confess to the persons I esteem the doubts they may have inspired, so that they may justify themselves, and excuse me, if I am wrong."

Rodin looked at Mdlle. de Cardoville with surprise, as if mentally calculating the suspicions that she might entertain, and replied, after a moment's silence: "You are perhaps thinking of my journey to Cardoville, of my base proposals to your good and worthy bailiff? Oh! if you——"

"No, no, sir," said Adrienne, interrupting him; "you made that confession spontaneously, and I quite understand, that, blinded with regard to M. d'Aigrigny, you passively executed instructions repugnant to your delicacy. But how comes it, that, with your incontestable merits, you have so long occupied so mean a position in his service?"

"It is true," said Rodin, with a smile; "that must impress you unfavorably, my dear young lady; for a man of any capacity, who remains long in an inferior condition, has evidently some radical vice, some bad or base passion——"

"It is generally true, sir."

'And personally true—with regard to myself."

"What, sir! do you make this avowal?"

"Alas! I confess that I have a bad passion, to which, for forty years, I have sacrificed all chances of attaining to a better position."

"And this passion, sir?"

"Since I must make the unpleasant avowal, this passion is indolence—yes, indolence—the horror of all activity of mind, of all moral responsibility, of taking the lead in anything. With the twelve hundred francs that Abbé d'Aigrigny gave me, I was the happiest man in the world; I trusted in the nobleness of his views; his thoughts became mine, his wishes mine. My work once finished, I returned to my poor little chamber, I lighted my fire, I dined on vegetables—then, taking up some book of philosophy, little known, and dreaming over it, I gave free course to my imagination, which, restrained all the day long, carried me through numberless theories to a delicious Utopia. Then, from the eminences of my intelligence, lifted up, Lord knows whither, by the audacity of my thoughts, I seemed to look down upon my master, and upon the great men of the earth. This fever lasted for three or four hours, after which I had a good sleep; and, the next morning, I went lightly to my work, secure of my daily bread, without cares for the future, living content with little, waiting with impatience for the delights of my solitary evening, and saying to myself as I went on writing like a stupid machine: "And yet—and yet—if I chose!"——

"Doubtless, you could, like others, surer than others, have

reached a higher position," said Adrienne, greatly struck with Rodin's practical philosophy.

"Yes, I think I could have done so; but for what purpose? —You see, my dear young lady, what often renders people of some merit puzzles to the vulgar, is that they are frequently content to say: 'If I chose!'"

"But, sir, without attaching much importance to the luxuries of life, there is a certain degree of comfort, which age renders almost indispensable, and which you seem to have utterly renounced."

"Undeceive yourself, if you please, my dear young lady," said Rodin, with a playful smile. "I am a true Sybarite; I require absolutely warm clothes, a good stove, a soft mattress, a good piece of bread, a fresh radish, flavored with good cheap salt, and some good, clear water; and, notwithstanding this complication of wants, my twelve hundred francs have always more than sufficed, for I have been able to make some little savings."

"But now that you are without employment, how will you manage to live, sir?" said Adrienne, more and more interested by the singularities of this man, and wishing to put his disinterestedness to the proof.

"I have laid by a little, which will serve me till I have unravelled the last thread of Father d'Aigrigny's dark designs. I owe myself this reparation, for having been his dupe; three or four days, I hope, will complete the work. After that, I have the certainty of meeting with a situation, in my native province, under a collector of taxes: some time ago, the offer was made me by a friend; but then I would not leave Father d'Aigrigny, notwithstanding the advantages proposed. Fancy, my dear young lady—eight hundred francs, with board and lodging! As I am a little of the roughest, I should have preferred lodging apart; but, as they give me so much, I must submit to this little inconvenience."

Nothing could exceed Rodin's ingenuity, in making these little household confidences (so abominably false) to Mdlle. de Cardoville, who felt her last suspicions give way.

"What, sir?" said she to the Jesuit, with interest; "in three or four days, you mean to quit Paris?"

"I hope to do so, my dear young lady; and that," added he, in a mysterious tone, "and that for many reasons. But what would be very precious to me," he resumed, in a serious voice, as he looked at Adrienne with emotion, "would be to carry with me the conviction, that you did me the

justice to believe, that, on merely reading your interview with the Princess de Saint-Dizier, I recognized at once qualities quite unexampled in our day, in a young person of your age and condition."

"Ah, sir!" said Adrienne, with a smile, "do not think yourself obliged to return so soon the sincere praises that I bestowed on your superiority of mind. I should be better pleased with ingratitude."

"Oh, no! I do not flatter you, my dear young lady. Why should I? We may probably never meet again. I do not flatter you; I understand you—that's all—and what will seem strange to you, is, that your appearance completes the idea which I had already formed of you, my dear young lady, in reading your interview with your aunt: and some parts of your character, hitherto obscure to me, are now fully displayed."

"Really, sir, you astonish me more and more."

"I can't help it! I merely describe my impressions. I can now explain perfectly, for example, your passionate love of the beautiful, your eager worship of the refinements of the senses, your ardent aspirations for a better state of things, your courageous contempt of many degrading and servile customs, to which woman is condemned; yes, now I understand the noble pride with which you contemplate the mob of vain, self-sufficient, ridiculous men, who look upon woman as a creature destined for their service, according to the laws made after their own not very handsome image. In the eyes of these hedge-tyrants, woman, a kind of inferior being, to whom a council of cardinals deigned to grant a soul by a majority of two voices, ought to think herself supremely happy in being the servant of these petty pachas, old at thirty, worn-out, used-up, weary with excesses, wishing only for repose, and seeking, as they say, to make an end of it, which they set about by marrying some poor girl, who is on her side desirous to make a beginning."

Mdlle. de Cardoville would certainly have smiled at these satirical remarks, if she had not been greatly struck by hearing Rodin express in such appropriate terms her own ideas, though it was the first time in her life that she saw this dangerous man. Adrienne forgot, or rather, she was not aware, that she had to deal with a Jesuit of rare intelligence, uniting the information and the mysterious resources of the police-spy with the profound sagacity of the confessor; one of those diabolic priests, who, by the help of a few hints, avowals, letters, reconstruct a character, as Cuvier could

reconstruct a body from zoological fragments. Far from interrupting Rodin, Adrienne listened to him with growing curiosity. Sure of the effect he produced, he continued, in a tone of indignation: "And your aunt and the Abbé d'-Aigrigny treated you as mad, because you revolted against the yoke of such tyrants! because, hating the shameful vices of slavery, you chose to be independent with the suitable qualities of independence, free with the proud virtues of liberty!"

"But, sir," said Adrienne, more and more surprised, "how can my thoughts be so familiar to you?"

"First, I know you perfectly, thanks to your interview with the Princess de Saint-Dizier: and next, if it should happen that we both pursue the same end, though by different means," resumed Rodin, artfully, as he looked at Mdlle. de Cardoville with an air of intelligence, "why should not our convictions be the same?"

"I do not understand you, sir. Of what end do you speak?"

"The end pursued incessantly by all lofty, generous, independent spirits—some acting, like you, my dear young lady, from passion, from instinct, without perhaps explaining to themselves the high mission they are called on to fulfil. Thus, for example, when you take pleasure in the most refined delights, when you surround yourself with all that charms the senses, do you think that you only yield to the attractions of the beautiful, to the desire of exquisite enjoyments? No! ah, no! for then you would be incomplete, odiously selfish, a dry egotist, with a fine taste—nothing more—and at your age, it would be hideous, my dear young lady, it would be hideous!"

"And do you really think thus severely of me?" said Adrienne, with uneasiness, so much influence had this man irresistibly attained over her.

"Certainly, I should think thus of you, if you loved luxury for luxury's sake;—but, no—quite another sentiment animates you," resumed the Jesuit. "Let us reason a little. Feeling a passionate desire for all these enjoyments, you know their value and their need more than any one—is it not so?"

"It is so," replied Adrienne, deeply interested.

"Your gratitude and favor are then necessarily acquired by those who, poor, laborious, and unknown, have procured for you these marvels of luxury, which you could not do without?"

"This feeling of gratitude is so strong in me, sir," replied Adrienne, more and more pleased to find herself so well understood, "that I once had inscribed on a masterpiece of goldsmith's work, instead of the name of the seller, that of the poor unknown artist who designed it, and who has since risen to his true place."

"There you see, I was not deceived," went on Rodin; "the taste for enjoyment renders you grateful to those who procure it for you; and that is not all; here am I, an example, neither better nor worse than my neighbors, but accustomed to privations, which cause me no suffering—so that the privations of others necessarily touch me less nearly than they do you, my dear young lady; for your habits of comfort must needs render you more compassionate towards misfortune. You would yourself suffer too much from poverty, not to pity and succor those who are its victims."

"Really sir," said Adrienne, who began to feel herself under the fatal charm of Rodin, "the more I listen to you, the more I am convinced that you would defend a thousand times better than I could those ideas for which I was so harshly reproached by Madame de Saint-Dizier and Abbé d'Aigrigny. Oh! speak, speak, sir! I cannot tell you with what happiness, with what pride I listen."

Attentive and moved, her eyes fixed on the Jesuit with as much interest as sympathy and curiosity, Adrienne, by a graceful toss of the head that was habitual to her, threw back her long, golden curls, the better to contemplate Rodin, who thus resumed: "You are astonished, my dear young lady, that you were not understood by your aunt or by Abbé d'Aigrigny! What point of contact had you with these hypocritical, jealous, crafty minds, such as I can judge them to be now? Do you wish a new proof of their hateful blindness? Among what they called your monstrous follies, which was the worst, the most damnable? Why, your resolution to live alone and in your own way, to dispose freely of the present and the future. They declared this to be odious, detestable, immoral. And yet—was this resolution dictated by a mad love of liberty? no!—by a disordered aversion to all restraint? no!—by the desire of singularity? —no!—for then I, too, should have blamed you severely."

"Other reasons have indeed guided me, sir, I assure you," said Adrienne eagerly, for she had become very eager for the esteem with which her character might inspire Rodin.

"Oh! I know it well; your motives could only be excellent ones," replied the Jesuit. "Why then did you take this

resolution, so much called in question? Was it to brave established etiquette? no! for you respected them until the hate of Mme. de Saint-Dizier forced you to withdraw yourself from her unbearable guardianship. Was it to live alone, to escape the eyes of the world? no! you would be a hundred times more open to observation in this than any other condition. Was it to make a bad use of your liberty? no, ah, no! those who design evil seek for darkness and solitude; while you place yourself right before the jealous and envious eyes of the vulgar crowd. Why then do you take this determination, so courageous and rare, unexampled in a young person of your age? Shall I tell you, my dear young lady? It is, that you wish to prove, by your example, that a woman of pure heart and honest mind, with a firm character and independence of soul, may nobly and proudly throw off the humiliating guardianship that custom has imposed upon her. Yes, instead of accepting the fate of a revolted slave, a life only destined to hypocrisy or vice, you wish to live freely in presence of all the world, independent, honorable, and respected. You wish to have, like man, the exercise of your own free will, the entire responsibility of all your actions, so as to establish the fact, that a woman left completely to herself, may equal man in reason, wisdom uprightness, and surpass him in delicacy and dignity. That is your design, my dear young lady. It is noble and great. Will your example be imitated? I hope it may; but whether it be so or not, your generous attempt, believe me, will place you in a high and worthy position."

Mdlle. de Cardoville's eyes shone with a proud and gentle brightness, her cheeks were slightly colored, her bosom heaved, she raised her charming head with a movement of involuntary pride; at length completely under the charm of that diabolical man, she exclaimed: "But, sir, who are you that can thus know and analyze my most secret thoughts, and read my soul more clearly than myself, so as to give new life and action to those ideas of independence which have long stirred within me? Who are you, that can thus elevate me in my own eyes, for now I am conscious of accomplishing a mission, honorable to myself, and perhaps useful to my sisters immersed in slavery? Once again, sir, who are you?"

"Who am I, madame?" answered Rodin, with a smile of the greatest good-nature; "I have already told you that I am a poor old man, who for the last forty years, having served in the day time as a writing machine to record the

ideas of others, went home every evening to work out ideas of his own—a good kind of man who, from his garret, watches and even takes some little share in the movement of generous spirits, advancing towards an end that is nearer than is commonly thought. And thus, my dear young lady, as I told you just now, you and I are both tending towards the same objects, though you may do the same without reflection, and merely in obedience to your rare and divine instincts. So continue so to live, fair, free, and happy!—it is your mission—more providential than you may think it. Yes; continue to surround yourself with all the marvels of luxury and art; refine your senses, purify your tastes, by the exquisite choice of your enjoyments; by genius, grace, and purity raise yourself above the stupid and ill-favored mob of men, that will instantly surround you, when they behold you alone and free; they will consider you an easy prey, destined to please their cupidity, their egotism, their folly. Laugh at them, and mock these idiotic and sordid pretensions. Be the queen of your own world, and make yourself respected as a queen. Love—shine—enjoy—it is your part upon earth. All the flowers, with which you are whelmed in profusion, will one day bear fruit. You think that you have lived only for pleasure; in reality, you will have lived for the noblest aims that could tempt a great and lofty soul. And so—some years hence—we may meet again, perhaps; you, fairer and more followed than ever; I, older and more obscure. But, no matter—a secret voice, I am sure, says to you at this moment, that between us two, however different, there exists an invisible bond, a mysterious communion, which nothing hereafter will ever be able to destroy!"

He uttered these final words in a tone of such profound emotion, that Adrienne started. Rodin had approached without her perceiving it, and without, as it were, walking at all, for he dragged his steps along the floor, with a sort of serpent motion; and he had spoken with so much warmth and enthusiasm, that his pale face had become slightly tinged, and his repulsive ugliness had almost disappeared before the brilliancy of his small sharp eyes, now wide open, and fixed full upon Adrienne. The latter leaned forward, with half-open lips and deep-drawn breath, nor could she take her eyes from the Jesuit's; he had ceased to speak, and yet she was still listening. The feelings of the fair young lady, in presence of this little old man, dirty, ugly, and poor, were inexplicable. That comparison so common, and yet so

true, of the frightful fascination of the bird by the serpent, might give some idea of the singular impression made upon her. Rodin's tactics were skilful and sure. Until now, Mdlle. de Cardoville had never analyzed her tastes or instincts. She had followed them, because they were inoffensive and charming. How happy and proud she then was sure to be to hear a man of superior mind not only praise these tendencies, for which she had been heretofore so severely blamed, but congratulate her upon them, as upon something great, noble, and divine! If Rodin had only addressed himself to Adrienne's self-conceit, he would have failed in his perfidious designs, for she had not the least spark of vanity. But he addressed himself to all that was enthusiastic and generous in her heart; that which he appeared to encourage and admire in her was really worthy of encouragement and admiration. How could she fail to be the dupe of such language, concealing though it did such dark and fatal projects?

Struck with the Jesuit's rare intelligence, feeling her curiosity greatly excited by some mysterious words that he had purposely uttered, hardly explaining to herself the strange influence which this pernicious counsellor already exercised over her, and animated by respectful compassion for a man of his age and talents placed in so precarious a position, Adrienne said to him, with all her natural cordiality, "A man of your merit and character, sir, ought not to be at the mercy of the caprice of circumstances. Some of your words have opened a new horizon before me; I feel that, on many points, your counsels may be of the greatest use to me. Moreover, in coming to fetch me from this house, and in devoting yourself to the service of other persons of my family, you have shown me marks of interest which I cannot forget without ingratitude. You have lost a humble but secure situation. Permit me——"

"Not a word more, my dear young lady," said Rodin, interrupting Mdlle. de Cardoville, with an air of chagrin. "I feel for you the deepest sympathy; I am honored by having ideas in common with you; I believe firmly that some day you will have to ask advice of the poor old philosopher; and, precisely because of all that, I must and ought to maintain towards you the most complete independence."

"But, sir, it is I that would be the obliged party, if you deigned to accept what I offer."

"Oh, my dear young lady," said Rodin, with a smile; "I know that your generosity would always know how to

make gratitude light and easy; but, once more, I cannot accept anything from you. One day, perhaps, you will know why."

"One day?"

"It is impossible for me to tell you more. And then, supposing I were under an obligation to you, how could I tell you all that was good and beautiful in your actions? Hereafter, if you are somewhat indebted to me for my advice, so much the better; I shall be the more ready to blame you, if I find anything to blame."

"In this way, sir, you would forbid me to be grateful to you."

"No, no," said Rodin, with apparent emotion. "Oh, believe me! there will come a solemn moment, in which you may repay all, in a manner worthy of yourself and me."

This conversation was here interrupted by the nurse, who said to Adrienne as she entered: "Madame, there is a little humpbacked workwoman downstairs, who wishes to speak to you. As, according to the doctor's new orders, you are to do as you like, I have come to ask, if I am to bring her up to you. She is so badly dressed, that I did not venture."

"Bring her up, by all means," said Adrienne, hastily, for she had recognized Mother Bunch by the nurse's description. "Bring her up directly."

"The doctor has also left word, that his carriage is to be at your orders, madame; are the horses to be put to?"

"Yes, in a quarter of an hour," answered Adrienne to the nurse, who went out; then, addressing Rodin, she continued: "I do not think the magistrate can now be long, before he returns with Marshal Simon's daughters?"

"I think not, my dear young lady; but who is this deformed workwoman?" asked Rodin, with an air of indifference.

"The adopted sister of a gallant fellow, who risked all in endeavoring to rescue me from this house. And, sir," said Adrienne, with emotion, "this young workwoman is a rare and excellent creature. Never was a nobler mind, a more generous heart, concealed beneath an exterior less ——"

But reflecting, that Rodin seemed to unite in his own person the same moral and physical contrasts as the sewing-girl, Adrienne stopped short, and then added, with inimitable grace, as she looked at the Jesuit, who was somewhat astonished at the sudden pause: "No; this noble girl is not the only person who proves how loftiness of soul, and superiority of mind, can make us indifferent to the vain

advantages which belong only to the accidents of birth or fortune." At the moment of Adrienne speaking these last words, Mother Bunch entered the room.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

SUSPICIONS.

MDLLE. DE CARDOVILLE sprang hastily to meet the visitor, and said to her, in a voice of emotion, as she extended her arms towards her: "Come—come—there is no grating to separate us now?"

On this allusion, which reminded her how her poor, laborious hand had been respectfully kissed by the fair and rich patrician, the young workwoman felt a sentiment of gratitude, which was at once ineffable and proud. But, as she hesitated to respond to the cordial reception, Adrienne embraced her with touching affection. When Mother Bunch found herself clasped in the fair arms of Mdlle. de Cardoville, when she felt the fresh and rosy lips of the young lady fraternally pressed to her own pale and sickly cheek, she burst into tears without being able to utter a word. Rodin, retired in a corner of the chamber, looked on this scene with secret uneasiness. Informed of the refusal, so full of dignity, which Mother Bunch had opposed to the perfidious temptations of the superior of St. Mary's Convent, and knowing the deep devotion of this generous creature for Agricola—a devotion which for some days she had so bravely extended to Mdlle. de Cardoville—the Jesuit did not like to see the latter thus laboring to increase that affection. He thought, wisely, that one should never despise friend or enemy, however small they may appear. Now, devotion to Mdlle. de Cardoville constituted an enemy in his eyes; and we know, moreover, that Rodin combined in his character rare firmness, with a certain degree of superstitious weakness, and he now felt uneasy at the singular impression of fear which Mother Bunch inspired in him. He determined to recollect this presentiment.

* * * * * * *

Delicate natures sometimes display in the smallest things the most charming instincts of grace and goodness. Thus, when the sewing-girl was shedding abundant and sweet tears of gratitude, Adrienne took a richly embroidered hand-

kerchief, and dried the pale and melancholy face. This action, so simple and spontaneous, spared the work-girl one humiliation; for, alas! humiliation and suffering are the two gulfs, along the edge of which misfortune continually passes. Therefore, the least kindness is in general a double benefit to the unfortunate. Perhaps the reader may smile in disdain at the puerile circumstance we mention. But poor Mother Bunch, not venturing to take from her pocket her old ragged hankerchief, would long have remained blinded by her tears, if Mdlle. de Cardoville had not come to her aid.

"Oh! you are so good—so nobly charitable, lady!" was all that the sempstress could say, in a tone of deep emotion; for she was still more touched by the attention of the young lady, than she would perhaps have been by a service rendered.

"Look there, sir," said Adrienne to Rodin, who drew near hastily. "Yes," added the young patrician, proudly, "I have indeed discovered a treasure. Look at her, sir; and love her as I love her, honor as I honor. She has one of those hearts for which we are seeking."

"And which, thank heaven, we are still able to find, my dear young lady!" said Rodin, as he bowed to the needlewoman.

The latter raised her eyes slowly, and looked at the Jesuit. At sight of that cadaverous countenance, which was smiling benignantly upon her, the young girl started. It was strange! she had never seen this man, and yet she felt instantly the same fear and repulsion that he had felt with regard to her. Generally timid and confused, the work-girl could not withdraw her eyes from Rodin's; her heart beat violently, as at the coming of some great danger, and, as the excellent creature feared only for those she loved, she approached Adrienne involuntarily, keeping her eyes fixed on Rodin. The Jesuit was too good a physiognomist not to perceive the formidable impression he had made, and he felt an increase of his instinctive aversion for the sempstress. Instead of casting down his eyes, he appeared to examine her with such sustained attention, that Mdlle. de Cardoville was astonished at it.

"I beg your pardon, my dear girl," said Rodin, as if recalling his recollections, and addressing himself to Mother Bunch, "I beg your pardon—but I think—if I am not deceived—did you not go a few days since to St. Mary's Convent, hard by?"

"Yes, sir."

"No doubt, it was you. Where then was my head?" cried Rodin. "It was you—I should have guessed it sooner."

"Of what do you speak, sir?" asked Adrienne.

"Oh! you are right, my dear young lady," said Rodin, pointing to the hunchback. "She has indeed a noble heart, such as we seek. If you knew with what dignity, with what courage this poor girl, who was out of work—and, for her, to want work is to want everything—if you knew, I say, with what dignity she rejected the shameful wages that the superior of the convent was unprincipled enough to offer, on condition of her acting as a spy in a family where it was proposed to place her."

"Oh, that is infamous!" cried Mdlle. de Cardoville, with disgust. "Such a proposal to this poor girl—to her!"

"Madame," said Mother Bunch, bitterly, "I had no work, I was poor, they did not know me—and they thought they might propose anything to the likes of me."

"And I tell you," said Rodin, "that it was a double baseness on the part of the superior, to offer such temptation to misery, and it was doubly noble in you to refuse."

"Sir," said the sewing-girl, with modest embarrassment.

"Oh! I am not to be intimidated," resumed Rodin. "Praise or blame, I speak out roughly what I think. Ask this dear young lady," he added, with a glance at Adrienne. "I tell you plainly, that I think as well of you as she does herself."

"Believe me, dear," said Adrienne, "there are some sorts of praise which honor, recompense, and encourage; and M. Rodin's is of the number. I know it,—yes, I know it."

"Nay, my dear young lady, you must not ascribe to me all the honor of this judgment."

"How so, sir?"

"Is not this dear girl the adopted sister of Agricola Baudoin, the gallant workman, the energetic and popular poet? Is not the affection of such a man the best of guarantees, and does it not enable us to judge, as it were, by the label?" added Rodin, with a smile.

"You are right, sir," said Adrienne; "for, before knowing this dear girl, I began to feel deeply interested in her, from the day that her adopted brother spoke to me about her. He expressed himself with so much warmth, so much enthusiasm, that I at once conceived an esteem for the person capable of inspiring so noble an attachment."

These words of Adrienne, joined to another circumstance, had such an effect upon their hearer, that her pale face became crimson. The unfortunate hunchback loved Agricola, with love as passionate as it was secret and painful; the most indirect allusion to this fatal sentiment occasioned her the most cruel embarrassment. Now, the moment Mdlle. de Cardoville spoke of Agricola's attachment for Mother Bunch, the latter had encountered Rodin's observing and penetrating look fixed upon her. Alone with Adrienne, the sempstress would have felt only a momentary confusion on hearing the name of the smith; but unfortunately she fancied that the Jesuit, who already filled her with involuntary fear, had seen into her heart, and read the secrets of that fatal love, of which she was the victim. Thence the deep blushes of the poor girl, and the embarrassment so painfully visible, that Adrienne was struck with it.

A subtle and prompt mind, like Rodin's on perceiving the smallest effect, immediately seeks the cause. Proceeding by comparison, the Jesuit saw on one side a deformed, but intelligent young girl, capable of passionate devotion; on the other, a young workman, handsome, bold, frank, and full of talent. "Brought up together, sympathizing with each other on many points, there must be some fraternal affection between them," said he to himself; "but fraternal affection does not blush, and the hunchback blushed and grew troubled beneath my look; does she, then, LOVE Agricola?"

Once on the scent of this discovery, Rodin wished to pursue the investigation. Remarking the surprise and visible uneasiness that Mother Bunch had caused in Adrienne, he said to the latter, with a smile, looking significantly at the needlewoman: "You see, my dear young lady, how she blushes. The good girl is troubled by what we said of the attachment of this gallant workman."

The needlewoman hung down her head, overcome with confusion. After the pause of a second, during which Rodin preserved silence, so as to give time for his cruel remark to pierce the heart of the victim, the savage resumed: "Look at the dear girl! how embarrassed she appears!"

Again, after another silence, perceiving that Mother Bunch from crimson had become deadly pale, and was trembling in all her limbs, the Jesuit feared he had gone too far, whilst Adrienne said to her friend, with anxiety: "Why, dear child, are you so agitated?"

"Oh! it is clear enough," resumed Rodin, with an air of perfect simplicity; for having discovered what he wished to know, he now chose to appear unconscious. "It is quite clear and plain. This good girl has the modesty of a kind and tender sister for a brother. When you praise him, she fancies that she is herself praised."

"And she is as modest as she is excellent," added Adrienne, taking both of the girl's hands, "the least praise, either of her adopted brother or of herself, troubles her in this way. But it is mere childishness, and I must scold her for it."

Mdlle. de Cardoville spoke sincerely, for the explanation given by Rodin appeared to her very plausible. Like all other persons who, dreading every moment the discovery of some painful secret have their courage as easily restored as shaken, Mother Bunch persuaded herself (and she needed to do so, to escape dying of shame), that the last words of Rodin were sincere, and that he had no idea of the love she felt for Agricola. So her agony diminished, and she found words to reply to Mdlle. de Cardoville.

"Excuse me, madame," she said timidly, "I am so little accustomed to such kindness as that with which you overwhelm me, that I make a sorry return for all your goodness."

"Kindness, my poor girl?" said Adrienne. "I have done nothing for you yet. But, thank heaven! from this day I shall be able to keep my promise, and reward your devotion to me, your courageous resignation, your sacred love of labor, and the dignity of which you have given so many proofs, under the most cruel privations. In a word, from this day, if you do not object to it, we will part no more."

"Madame, you are too kind," said Mother Bunch, in a trembling voice; "but I——"

"Oh! be satisfied," said Adrienne, anticipating her meaning. "If you accept my offer, I shall know how to reconcile with my desire (not a little selfish) of having you near me, the independence of your character, your habits of labor, your taste for retirement, and your anxiety to devote yourself to those who deserve commiseration; it is, I confess, by affording you the means of satisfying these generous tendencies, that I hope to seduce and keep you by me."

"But what have I done?" asked the other, simply, "to merit any gratitude from you? Did you not begin, on the contrary, by acting so generously to my adopted brother?"

"Oh! I do not speak of gratitude," said Adrienne; "we

are quits. I speak of friendship and sincere affection, which I now offer you."

"Friendship to me, madame?"

"Come, come," said Adrienne, with a charming smile "do not be proud because your position gives you the advantage. I have set my heart on having you for a friend, and you will see that it shall be so. But now that I think of it (a little late, you will say), what good wind brings you hither?"

"This morning M. Dagobert received a letter, in which he was requested to come to this place, to learn some news that would be of the greatest interest to him. Thinking it concerned Marshal Simon's daughters, he said to me: 'Mother Bunch, you have taken so much interest in those dear children, that you must come with me: you shall witness my joy on finding them, and that will be your reward——'"

Adrienne glanced at Rodin. The latter made an affirmative movement of the head, and answered: "Yes, yes, my dear young lady: it was I who wrote to the brave soldier, but without signing the letter, or giving any explanation. You shall know why."

"Then, my dear girl, why did you come alone?" said Adrienne.

"Alas, madame! on arriving here, it was your kind reception that made me forget my fears."

"What fears?" asked Rodin.

"Knowing that you lived here, madame, I supposed the letter was from you; I told M. Dagobert so, and he thought the same. When we arrived, his impatience was so great, that he asked at the door if the orphans were in this house, and he gave their description. They told him no. Then, in spite of my supplications, he insisted on going to the convent to inquire about them."

"What imprudence!" cried Adrienne.

"After what took place the other night, when he broke in," added Rodin, shrugging his shoulders.

"It was in vain to tell him," returned Mother Bunch, "that the letter did not announce positively, that the orphans would be delivered up to him; but that, no doubt, he would gain some information about them. He refused to hear anything, but said to me: 'If I cannot find them, I will rejoin you. But they were at the convent the day before yesterday, and now that all is discovered, they cannot refuse to give them up——'"

"And with such a man there is no disputing!" said Rodin, with a smile.

"I hope they will not recognize him!" said Adrienne, remembering Baleinier's threats.

"It is not likely," replied Rodin; "they will only refuse him admittance. That will be, I hope, the worst misfortune that will happen. Besides, the magistrate will soon be here with the girls. I am no longer wanted: other cares require my attention. I must seek out Prince Djalma. Only tell me, my dear young lady, where I shall find you, to keep you informed of my discoveries, and to take measures with regard to the young prince, if my inquiries, as I hope, shall be attended with success."

"You will find me in my new house, Rue d'Anjou, formerly Beaulieu House. But now I think of it," said Adrienne, suddenly, after some moments of reflection, "it would not be prudent or proper, on many accounts, to lodge the Prince Djalma in the pavilion I occupied at Saint-Dizier House. I saw, some time ago, a charming little house, all furnished and ready; it only requires some embellishments, that could be completed in twenty-four hours, to make it a delightful residence. Yes, that will be a thousand times preferable," added Mdlle. de Cardoville, after a new interval of silence; "and I shall thus be able to preserve the strictest incognito."

"What!" cried Rodin, whose projects would be much impeded by this new resolution of the young lady; "you do not wish him to know who you are?"

"I wish Prince Djalma to know absolutely nothing of the anonymous friend who comes to his aid; I desire that my name should not be pronounced before him, and that he should not even know of my existence—at least, for the present. Hereafter—in a month, perhaps—I will see; circumstances will guide me."

"But this incognito," said Rodin, hiding his disappointment, "will be difficult to preserve."

"If the prince had inhabited the lodge, I agree with you; the neighborhood of my aunt would have enlightened him, and this fear is one of the reasons that have induced me to renounce my first project. But the prince will inhabit a distant quarter—the Rue Blanche. Who will inform him of my secret? One of my old friends, M. Norval—you, sir—and this dear girl," pointing to Mother Bunch, "on whose discretion I can depend as on your own, will be my only confidants. My secret will then be quite safe. Besides, we

will talk further on this subject to-morrow. You must begin by discovering the retreat of this unfortunate young prince."

Rodin, though much vexed at Adrienne's subtle determination with regard to Djalma, put the best face on the matter, and replied: "Your intentions shall be scrupulously fulfilled, my dear young lady; and to-morrow, with your leave, I hope to give you a good account of what you are pleased to call my providential mission."

"To-morrow, then, I shall expect you with impatience," said Adrienne, to Rodin, affectionately. "Permit me always to rely upon you, as from this day you may count upon me. You must be indulgent with me, sir; for I see that I shall yet have many counsels, many services to ask of you—though I already owe you so much."

"You will never owe me enough, my dear young lady, never enough," said Rodin, as he moved discreetly towards the door, after bowing to Adrienne. At the very moment he was going out, he found himself face to face with Dagobert.

"Holloa! at last I have caught one!" shouted the soldier, as he seized the Jesuit by the collar with a vigorous hand.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

EXCUSES.

On seeing Dagobert grasp Rodin so roughly by the collar, Mdlle. de Cardoville exclaimed in terror, as she advanced several steps towards the soldier: "In the name of Heaven, sir! what are you doing?"

"What am I doing?" echoed the soldier, harshly, without relaxing his hold on Rodin, and turning his head towards Adrienne, whom he did not know; "I take this opportunity to squeeze the throat of one of the wretches in the band of that renegade, until he tells me where my poor children are."

"You strangle me," said the Jesuit, in a stifled voice, as he tried to escape from the soldier.

"Where are the orphans, since they are not here, and the convent door has been closed against me?" cried Dagobert, in a voice of thunder.

"Help! help!" gasped Rodin.

"Oh! it is dreadful!" said Adrienne, as, pale and trembling, she held up her clasped hands to Dagobert. "Have mercy, sir! listen to me! listen to him!"

"M. Dagobert!" cried Mother Bunch, seizing with her weak hands the soldier's arm, and showing him Adrienne, "this is Mdlle. de Cardoville. What violence in her presence! and then, you are deceived—doubtless!"

At the name of Mdlle. de Cardoville, the benefactress of his son, the soldier turned round suddenly, and loosened his hold on Rodin. The later, crimson with rage and suffocation, set about adjusting his collar and his cravat.

"I beg your pardon, madame," said Dagobert, going towards Adrienne, who was still pale with fright; "I did not know who you were, and the first impulse of anger quite carried me away."

"But what has this gentleman done to you?" said Adrienne. "If you had listened to me, you would have learned——"

"Excuse me if I interrupt you, madame," said the soldier to Adrienne, in a hollow voice. Then addressing himself to Rodin, who had recovered his coolness, he added: "Thank the lady, and begone!—If you remain here, I will not answer for myself."

"One word only, my dear sir," said Rodin.

"I tell you that if you remain, I will not answer for myself!" cried Dagobert, stamping his foot.

"But, for heaven's sake, tell me the cause of this anger," resumed Adrienne; "above all, do not trust to appearances. Calm yourself, and listen."

"Calm myself, madame!" cried Dagobert, in despair; "I can think only of one thing, madame—of the arrival of Marshal Simon—he will be in Paris to-day or to-morrow."

"Is it possible?" said Adrienne. Rodin started with surprise and joy.

"Yesterday evening," proceeded Dagobert, "I received a letter from the marshal; he has landed at Havre. For three days I have taken step after step, hoping that the orphans would be restored to me, as the machinations of those wretches have failed." He pointed to Rodin with a new gesture of impatience. "Well! it is not so. They are conspiring some new infamy. I am prepared for anything."

"But, sir," said Rodin advancing, "permit me——"

"Begone!" cried Dagobert, whose irritation and anxiety redoubled, as he thought how at any moment Marshal

Simon might arrive in Paris. "Begone! Were it not for this lady, I would at least be revenged on some one."

Rodin made a nod of intelligence to Adrienne, whom he approached prudently, and, pointing to Dagobert with a gesture of affectionate commiseration, he said to the latter: "I will leave you, sir, and the more willingly, as I was about to withdraw when you entered." Then, coming still closer to Mdlle. de Cardoville, the Jesuit whispered to her, "Poor soldier! he is beside himself with grief, and would be incapable of hearing me. Explain it all to him, my dear young lady; he will be nicely caught," added he, with a cunning air. "But in the meantime," resumed Rodin, feeling in the side-pocket of his great-coat and taking out a small parcel, "let me beg you to give him this, my dear young lady. It is my revenge, and a very good one."

And while Adrienne, holding the little parcel in her hand, looked at the Jesuit with astonishment, the latter laying his forefinger upon his lip, as if recommending silence, drew backward on tiptoe to the door, and went out after again pointing to Dagobert with a gesture of pity; while the soldier, in sullen dejection, with his head drooping, and his arms crossed upon his bosom, remained deaf to the sewing-girl's earnest consolations. When Rodin had left the room, Adrienne, approaching the soldier, said to him, in her mild voice, with an expression of deep interest, "Your sudden entry prevented my asking you a question that greatly concerns me. How is your wound?"

"Thank you, madame," said Dagobert, starting from his painful lethargy, "it is of no consequence, but I have not time to think of it. I am sorry to have been so rough in your presence, and to have driven away that wretch; but 'tis more than I could master. At sight of those people, my blood is all up."

"And yet, believe me, you have been too hasty in your judgment. The person who was just now here——"

"Too hasty, madame! I do not see him to-day for the first time. He was with that renegade the Abbé d'Aigrigny——"

"No doubt—and yet he is an honest and excellent man."

"He!" cried Dagobert.

"Yes, for at this moment he is busy about only one thing—restoring to you those dear children!"

"He!" repeated Dagobert, as if he could not believe what he heard. "He restore me my children?"

"Yes; and sooner, perhaps, than you think for."

"Madame," said Dagobert, abruptly, "he deceives you. You are the dupe of that old rascal."

"No," said Adrienne, shaking her head, with a smile. "I have proofs of his good faith. First of all, it is he who delivers me from this house."

"Is it true?" said Dagobert, quite confounded.

"Very true; and here is, perhaps, something that will reconcile you to him," said Adrienne, as she delivered the small parcel which Rodin had given her as she went out. "Not wishing to exasperate you by his presence, he said to me: 'Give this to that brave soldier; it is my revenge.'"

Dagobert looked at Mdlle. de Cardoville with surprise, as he mechanically opened the little parcel. When he had unfolded it, and discovered *his* own silver cross, black with age, and the old red, faded ribbon, treasures taken from him at the White Falcon Inn, at the same time as his papers, he exclaimed in a broken voice: "My cross! my cross! It is my cross!" In the excitement of his joy, he pressed the silver star to his gray moustache.

Adrienne and the other were deeply affected by the emotion of the old soldier, who continued, as he ran towards the door by which Rodin had gone out: "Next to a service rendered to Marshal Simon, my wife, or son, nothing could be more precious to me. And you answer for this worthy man, madame, and I have ill used him in your presence! Oh! he is entitled to reparation, and he shall have it."

So saying, Dagobert left the room precipitately, hastened through two other apartments, gained the staircase, and descending it rapidly, overtook Rodin on the lowest step.

"Sir," said the soldier to him, in an agitated voice, as he seized him by the arm, "you must come upstairs directly."

"You should make up your mind to one thing or the other, my dear sir," said Rodin, stopping good-naturedly; "one moment you tell me to begone, and the next to return. How are we to decide?"

"Just now, sir, I was wrong; and when I am wrong, I acknowledge it. I abused and ill-treated you before witnesses; I will make you my apologies before witnesses."

"But, my dear sir—I am much obliged to you—I am in a hurry."

"I cannot help your being in a hurry. I tell you, I must have you come upstairs, directly—or else—or else," resumed Dagobert, taking the hand of the Jesuit, and pressing it with as much cordiality as emotion, "or else the happiness

you have caused me in returning my cross will not be complete."

"Well, then, my good friend, let us go up."

"And not only have you restored me my cross, for which I have wept many tears, believe me, unknown to any one," cried Dagobert, much affected; "but the young lady told me, that, thanks to you, those poor children—but tell me—no false joy—is it really true?—My God! is it really true?"

"Ah! ah! Mr. Inquisitive," said Rodin, with a cunning smile. Then he added: "Be perfectly tranquil, my growler; you shall have your two angels back again." And the Jesuit began to ascend the stairs.

"Will they be restored to me to-day?" cried Dagobert, stopping Rodin abruptly, by catching hold of his sleeve.

"Now, really, my good friend," said the Jesuit, "let us come to the point. Are we to go up or down? I do not find fault, but you turn me about like a teetotum."

"You are right. We shall be better able to explain things upstairs. Come with me—quick! quick!" said Dagobert, as, taking the Jesuit by the arm, he hurried him along, and brought him triumphantly into the room, where Adrienne and Mother Bunch had remained in much surprise at the soldier's sudden disappearance.

"Here he is! here he is!" cried Dagobert, as he entered. "Luckily, I caught him at the bottom of the stairs."

"And you have made me come up at a fine pace!" added Rodin, pretty well out of breath.

"Now, sir," said Dagobert, in a grave voice, "I declare, in presence of all, that I was wrong to abuse and ill-treat you. I make you my apology for it, sir; and I acknowledge, with joy, that I owe you—much—oh! very much—and when I owe, I pay."

So saying, Dagobert held out his honest hand to Rodin, who pressed it in a very affable manner, and replied: "Now, really—what is all this about? What great service do you speak of?"

"This!" said Dagobert, holding up the cross before Rodin's eyes. "You do not know, then, what this cross is to me?"

"On the contrary, supposing you would set great store by it, I intended to have the pleasure of delivering it myself. I had brought it for that purpose; but, between ourselves, you gave me so warm a reception, that I had not the time——"

"Sir," said Dagobert, in confusion, "I assure you that I sincerely repent of what I have done."

"I know it, my good friend; do not say another word about it. You were then much attached to this cross?"

"Attached to it, sir!" cried Dagobert. "Why, this cross," and he kissed it as he spoke, "is my relic. He from whom it came was my saint—my hero—and he had touched it with his hand!"

"Oh!" said Rodin, feigning to regard the cross with as much curiosity as respectful admiration; "did Napoleon—the Great Napoleon—indeed touch with his own hand—that victorious hand!—this noble star of honor?"

"Yes, sir, with his own hand. He placed it there upon my bleeding breast, as a cure for my fifth wound. So that, you see, were I dying of hunger, I think I should not hesitate betwixt bread and my cross—that I might, in any case, have it on my heart in death. But, enough—enough!—let us talk of something else. It is foolish in an old soldier, is it not?" added Dagobert, drawing his hand across his eyes, and then, as if ashamed to deny what he really felt: "Well, then! yes," he resumed, raising his head proudly, and no longer seeking to conceal the tears that rolled down his cheek; "yes, I weep for joy, to have found my cross—my cross, that the Emperor gave me with his *victorious* hand, as this worthy man has called it."

"Then blessed be my poor old hand for having restored you the glorious treasure!" said Rodin, with emotion. "In truth," he added, "the day will be a good one for everybody—as I announced to you this morning in my letter."

"That letter without a signature?" asked the soldier, more and more astonished. "Was it from you?"

"It was I who wrote it. Only, fearing some new snare of the Abbé d'Aigrigny, I did not choose, you understand, to explain myself more clearly."

"Then—I shall see—my orphans?"

Rodin nodded affirmatively, with an expression of great good-nature.

"Presently—perhaps immediately," said Adrienne, with a smile. "Well! was I right in telling you that you had not judged this gentleman fairly?"

"Why did he not tell me this when I came in?" cried Dagobert, almost beside himself with joy.

"There was one difficulty in the way, my good friend," said Rodin; "it was, that when you came in, you nearly throttled me."

"True; I was too hasty. Once more, I ask your pardon. But was I to blame? I had only seen you with that Abbé d'Aigrigny, and in the first moment——"

"This dear young lady," said Rodin, bowing to Adrienne, "will tell you that I have been, without knowing it, the accomplice in many perfidious actions; but as soon as I began to see my way through the darkness, I quitted the evil course on which I had entered, and returned to that which is honest, just, and true."

Adrienne nodded affirmatively to Dagobert, who appeared to consult her look.

"If I did not sign the letter that I wrote to you, my good friend, it was partly from fear that my name might inspire suspicion; and if I asked you to come hither, instead of to the convent, it was that I had some dread—like this dear young lady—lest you might be recognized by the porter or by the gardener, your affair of the other night rendering such a recognition somewhat dangerous."

"But M. Baleinier knows all; I forgot that," said Adrienne, with uneasiness. "He threatened to denounce M. Dagobert and his son, if I made any complaint."

"Do not be alarmed, my dear young lady; it will soon be for you to dictate conditions," replied Rodin. "Leave that to me; and as for you, my good friend, your torments are now finished."

"Yes," said Adrienne, "an upright and worthy magistrate has gone to the convent, to fetch Marshal Simon's daughters. He will bring them hither; but he thought with me, that it would be most proper for them to take up their abode in my house. I cannot, however, come to this decision without your consent, for it is to you that these orphans were entrusted by their mother."

"You wish to take her place with regard to them, madame?" replied Dagobert; "I can only thank you with all my heart, for myself and for the children. But, as the lesson has been a sharp one, I must beg to remain at the door of their chamber, night and day. If they go out with you, I must be allowed to follow them at a little distance, so as to keep them in view, just like Spoil-sport, who has proved himself a better guardian than myself. When the marshal is once here—it will be in a day or two—my post will be relieved. Heaven grant it may be soon!"

"Yes," replied Rodin, in a firm voice, "heaven grant he may arrive soon, for he will have to demand a terrible reckoning of the Abbé d'Aigrigny, for the persecution of his daughters; and yet the marshal does not know all."

"And don't you tremble for the renegade?" asked Dagobert, as he thought how the marquis would soon find himself face to face with the marshal.

"I never care for cowards and traitors," answered Rodin; "and when Marshal Simon returns——" Then, after a pause of some seconds, he continued: "If he will do me the honor to hear me, he shall be edified as to the conduct of the Abbé d'Aigrigny. The marshal knows that his dearest friends, as well as himself, have been victims of the hatred of that dangerous man."

"How so?" said Dagobert.

"Why, yourself, for instance," replied Rodin; you are an example of what I advance."

"I?"

"Do you think it was mere chance, that brought about the scene at the White Falcon Inn, near Leipsic?"

"Who told you of that scene?" said Dagobert in astonishment.

"Where you accepted the challenge of Morok," continued the Jesuit, without answering Dagobert's question, "and so fell into a trap, or else refused it, and were then arrested for want of papers, and thrown into prison as a vagabond, with these poor children. Now, do you know the object of this violence? It was to prevent your being here on the 13th of February."

"But the more I hear, sir," said Adrienne, "the more I am alarmed at the audacity of the Abbé d'Aigrigny, and the extent of the means he has at his command. Really," she resumed, with increasing surprise, "if your words were not entitled to absolute belief——"

"You would doubt their truth, madame?" said Dagobert. "It is like me. Bad as he is, I cannot think that this renegade had relations with a wild-beast showman as far off as Saxony; and then, how could he know that I and the children were to pass through Leipsic? It is impossible, my good man."

"In fact, sir," resumed Adrienne, "I fear that you are deceived by your dislike (a very legitimate one) of Abbé d'Aigriny, and that you ascribe to him an almost fabulous degree of power and extent of influence."

After a moment's silence, during which Rodin looked first at Adrienne and then at Dagobert, with a kind of pity, he resumed. "How could the Abbé d'Aigrigny have your cross in his possession, if he had no connection with Morok?"

"That is true, sir," said Dagobert; "joy prevented me from reflecting. But how, indeed, did my cross come into your hands?"

"By means of the Abbé d'Aigrigny's having precisely those relations with Leipsic, of which you and the young lady seem to doubt."

"But how did my cross get to Paris?"

"Tell me; you were arrested at Leipsic for want of papers—is it not so?"

"Yes; but I could never understand how my passports and money disappeared from my knapsack. I thought I must have had the misfortune to lose them."

Rodin shrugged his shoulders, and replied: "You were robbed of them at the White Falcon Inn, by Goliath, one of Morok's servants, and the latter sent the papers and the cross to the Abbé d'Aigrigny, to prove that he had succeeded in executing his orders with respect to the orphans and yourself. It was the day before yesterday, that I obtained the key of that dark machination. Cross and papers were amongst the stores of Abbé d'Aigrigny; the papers formed a considerable bundle, and he might have missed them; but, hoping to see you this morning, and knowing how a soldier of the Empire values his cross, his sacred relic, as you call it, my good friend—I did not hesitate. I put the relic into my pocket. 'After all,' said I, 'it is only restitution, and my delicacy perhaps exaggerates this breach of trust.'"

"You could not have done a better action," said Adrienne; "and, for my part, because of the interest I feel for M. Dagobert, I take it as a personal favor. But, sir," after a moment's silence, she resumed with anxiety: "What terrible power must be at the command of M. d'Aigrigny, for him to have such extensive and formidable relations in a foreign country!"

"Silence!" said Rodin, in a low voice, and looking round him with an air of alarm. "Silence! In heaven's name do not ask me about it!"

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

REVELATIONS.

Mdlle. de Cardoville, much astonished at the alarm displayed by Rodin, when she had asked him for some explanation of the formidable and far-reaching power of the Abbé

d'Aigrigny, said to him: "Why, sir, what is there so strange in the question that I have just asked you?"

After a moment's silence, Rodin cast his looks all around, with well-feigned uneasiness, and replied in a whisper: "Once more, madame, do not question me on so fearful a subject. The walls of this house may have ears."

Adrienne and Dagobert looked at each other with growing surprise. Mother Bunch, by an instinct of incredible force, continued to regard Rodin with invincible suspicion. Sometimes she stole a glance at him, as if trying to penetrate the mask of this man, who filled her with fear. At one moment, the Jesuit encountered her anxious gaze, obstinately fixed upon him; immediately he nodded to her with the greatest amenity. The young girl, alarmed at finding herself observed, turned away with a shudder.

"No, no, my dear young lady," resumed Rodin, with a sigh, as he saw Mdlle. de Cardoville astonished at his silence; "do not question me on the subject of Abbé d'Aigrigny's power!"

"But, to persist, sir," said Adrienne; "why this hesitation to answer? What do you fear?"

"Ah, my dear young lady," said Rodin, shuddering, "those people are so powerful! their animosity is so terrible!"

"Be satisfied, sir; I owe you too much, for my support ever to fail you."

"Ah, my dear young lady," cried Rodin, as if hurt by the supposition; "think better of me, I entreat you. Is it for myself that I fear?—No, no; I am too obscure, too inoffensive; but it is for you, for Marshal Simon, for the other members of your family, that all is to be feared. Oh, my dear young lady! let me beg you to ask no questions. There are secrets which are fatal to those who possess them."

"But, sir, is it not better to know the perils with which one is threatened?"

"When you know the manœuvres of your enemy, you may at least defend yourself," said Dagobert. "I prefer an attack in broad daylight to an ambuscade."

"And I assure you," resumed Adrienne, "the few words you have spoken cause me a vague uneasiness."

"Well, if I must, my dear young lady," replied the Jesuit, appearing to make a great effort, "since you do not understand my hints, I will be more explicit; but remember," added he, in a deeply serious tone, "that you have persevered in forcing me to tell you what you had perhaps better not have known."

"Speak, sir, I pray you speak," said Adrienne.

Drawing about him Adrienne, Dagobert, and Mother Bunch, Rodin said to them in a low voice, and with a mysterious air: "Have you never heard of a powerful association, which extends its net over all the earth, and counts its disciples, agents, and fanatics in every class of society—which has had, and often has still, the ear of kings and nobles—which, in a word, can raise its creatures to the highest positions, and with a word can reduce them again to the nothingness from which it alone could uplift them?"

"Good heaven, sir!" said Adrienne, "what formidable association? Until now I never heard of it."

"I believe you; and yet your ignorance on this subject greatly astonishes me, my dear young lady."

"And why should it astonish you?"

"Because you lived some time with your aunt, and must have often seen the Abbé d'Aigrigny."

"I lived at the princess's, but not with her; for a thousand reasons she had inspired me with warrantable aversion."

"In truth, my dear young lady, my remark was ill-judged. It was there, above all, and particularly in your presence, that they would keep silence with regard to this association—and yet to it alone did the Princess de Saint-Dizier owe her formidable influence in the world, during the last reign. Well, then; know this—it is the aid of that association which renders the Abbé d'Aigrigny so dangerous a man. By it he was enabled to follow and to reach divers members of your family, some in Siberia, some in India, others on the heights of the American mountains; but, as I have told you, it was only the day before yesterday, and by chance, that, examining the papers of Abbé d'Aigrigny, I found the trace of his connection with this Company, of which he is the most active and able chief."

"But the name, sir, the name of this Company?" said Adrienne.

"Well! it is——" but Rodin stopped short.

"It is," repeated Adrienne, who was now as much interested as Dagobert and the sempstress; "it is——"

Rodin looked round him, beckoned all the actors in this scene to draw nearer, and said in a whisper, laying great stress upon the words. "It is—the Society of Jesus!" and he again shuddered.

"The Jesuits!" cried Mdlle. de Cardoville, unable to restrain a burst of laughter, which was the more buoyant, as, from the mysterious precautions of Rodin, she had expected

some very different revelation. "The Jesuits!" she resumed, still laughing. "They have no existence, except in books; they are frightful historical personages, certainly; but why should you put forward Madame de Saint-Dizier and M. d'Aigrigny in that character? Such as they are, they have done quite enough to justify my aversion and disdain."

After listening in silence to Mdlle. de Cardoville, Rodin continued, with a grave and agitated air: "Your blindness frightens me, my dear young lady; the past should have given you some anxiety for the future, since, more than any one, you have already suffered from the fatal influence of this Company, whose existence you regard as a dream!"

"I, sir?" said Adrienne, with a smile, although a little surprised.

"You."

"Under what circumstances?"

"You ask me this question! my dear young lady! you ask me this question!—and yet you have been confined here as a mad person! Is it not enough to tell you that the master of this house is one of the most devoted lay members of the Company, and therefore the blind instrument of the Abbé d'Aigrigny."

"So," said Adrienne, this time without smiling, "Dr. Baleinier——"

"Obeyed the Abbé d'Aigrigny, the most formidable chief of that formidable society. He employs his genius for evil; but I must confess he is a man of genius. Therefore, it is upon him that you and yours must fix all your doubts and suspicions; it is against him that you must be upon your guard. For, believe me, I know him, and he does not look upon the game as lost. You must be prepared for new attacks, doubtless of another kind, but only the more dangerous on that account——"

"Luckily, you give us notice," said Dagobert, "and you will be on our side."

"I can do very little, my good friends; but that little is at the service of honest people," said Rodin.

"Now," said Adrienne, with a thoughtful air, completely persuaded by Rodin's air of conviction, "I can explain the inconceivable influence that my aunt exercised in the world. I ascribed it chiefly to her relations with persons in power; I thought that she, like the Abbé d'Aigrigny, was concerned in dark intrigues, for which religion served as a veil—but I was far from believing what you tell me."

"How many things you have got to learn!" resumed Rodin. "If you knew, my dear young lady, with what art these people surround you, without your being aware of it, by agents devoted to themselves! Every one of your steps is known to them, when they have any interest in such knowledge. Thus, little by little, they act upon you—slowly, cautiously, darkly. They circumvent you by every possible means, from flattery to terror—seduce or frighten, in order at last to rule you, without your being conscious of their authority. Such is their object, and I must confess they pursue it with detestable ability."

Rodin had spoken with so much sincerity, that Adrienne trembled; then, reproaching herself with these fears, she resumed: "And yet, no—I can never believe in so infernal a power; the might of priestly ambition belongs to another age. Heaven be praised, it has disappeared forever!"

"Yes, certainly, it is out of sight; for they now know how to disperse and disappear, when circumstances require it. But then are they the most dangerous; for suspicion is laid asleep, and they keep watch in the dark. Oh! my dear young lady, if you knew their frightful ability! In my hatred of all that is oppressive, cowardly, and hypocritical, I had studied the history of that terrible society, before I knew that the Abbé d'Aigrigny belonged to it. Oh! it is dreadful. If you knew what means they employ! When I tell you that, thanks to their diabolical devices, the most pure and devoted appearances often conceal the most horrible snares." Rodin's eye rested, as if by chance, on the hunchback; but, seeing that Adrienne did not take the hint, the Jesuit continued: "In a word—are you not exposed to their pursuits?—have they any interest in gaining you over?—oh! from that moment, suspect all that surround you, suspect the most noble attachments, the most tender affections, for these monsters sometimes succeed in corrupting your best friends, and making a terrible use of them, in proportion to the blindness of your confidence."

"Oh! it is impossible," cried Adrienne, in horror. "You must exaggerate. No! hell itself never dreamed of more frightful treachery!"

"Alas, my dear young lady! one of your relations, M. Hardy—the most loyal and generous-hearted man that could be—has been the victim of some such infamous treachery. Do you know what we learned from the reading of your ancestor's will? Why, that he died the victim of the malevolence of these people; and now, at the lapse of a hundred and

fifty years, his descendants are still exposed to the hate of that indestructible society."

"Oh, sir! it terrifies me," said Adrienne, feeling her heart sink within her. "But are there no weapons against such attacks?"

"Prudence, my dear young lady—the most watchful caution—the most incessant study and suspicion of all that approach you."

"But such a life would be frightful! It is a torture to be the victim of continual suspicions, doubts, and fears."

"Without doubt! They know it well, the wretches! That constitutes their strength. They often triumph by the very excess of the precautions taken against them. Thus, my dear young lady, and you, brave and worthy soldier, in the name of all that is dear to you, be on your guard, and do not lightly impart your confidence. Be on your guard, for you have nearly fallen the victims of those people. They will always be your implacable enemies. And you, also, poor, interesting girl!" added the Jesuit, speaking to Mother Bunch, "follow my advice—fear these people. Sleep, as the proverb says, with one eye open."

"I, sir!" said the work-girl, "What have I done? what have I to fear?"

"What have you done? Dear me! Do not you tenderly love this young lady, your protectress? have you not attempted to assist her? Are you not the adopted sister of the son of this intrepid soldier, the brave Agricola! Alas, poor girl! are not these sufficient claims to their hatred, in spite of your obscurity? Nay, my dear young lady! do not think that I exaggerate. Reflect! only reflect! Think what I have just said to the faithful companion-in-arms of Marshal Simon, with regard to his imprisonment at Leipsic. Think what happened to yourself, when, against all law and reason, you were brought hither. Then you will see, that there is nothing exaggerated in the picture I have drawn of the secret power of this Company. Be always on your guard, and, in doubtful cases, do not fear to apply to me. In three days, I have learned enough by my own experience, with regard to their manner of acting, to be able to point out to you many a snare, device, and danger, and to protect you from them."

"In any such case, sir," replied Mdlle. de Cardoville, "my interests, as well as gratitude, would point to you as my best counsellor."

According to the skilful tactics of the sons of Loyola, who

sometimes deny their own existence, in order to escape from an adversary—and sometimes proclaim with audacity the living power of their organization, in order to intimidate the feeble—Rodin had laughed in the face of the bailiff of Cardoville, when the latter had spoken of the existence of the Jesuits; while now, at this moment, picturing their means of action, he endeavored, and he succeeded in the endeavor, to impregnate the mind of Mdlle. de Cardoville with some germs of doubt, which were gradually to develop themselves by reflection, and serve hereafter the dark projects that he meditated. Mother Bunch still felt considerable alarm with regard to Rodin. Yet, since she had heard the fatal powers of the formidable Order revealed to Adrienne, the young sempstress, far from suspecting the Jesuit of having the audacity to speak thus of a society of which he was himself a member, felt grateful to him, in spite of herself, for the important advice that he had just given her patroness. The side-glance which she now cast upon him (which Rodin also detected, for he watched the young girl with sustained attention), was full of gratitude, mingled with surprise. Guessing the nature of this impression, and wishing entirely to remove her unfavorable opinion, and also to anticipate a revelation which would be made sooner or later, the Jesuit appeared to have forgotten something of great importance, and exclaimed, striking his forehead: "What was I thinking of?" Then, speaking to Mother Bunch, he added: "Do you know where your sister is, my dear girl?" Disconcerted and saddened by this unexpected question, the workwoman answered with a blush, for she remembered her last interview with the brilliant Bacchanal Queen: "I have not seen my sister for some days, sir."

"Well, my dear girl, she is not very comfortable," said Rodin; "I promised one of her friends to send her some little assistance. I have applied to a charitable person, and that is what I received for her." So saying, he drew from his pocket a sealed roll of coin, which he delivered to Mother Bunch, who was now both surprised and affected.

"You have a sister in trouble, and I know nothing of it?" said Adrienne, hastily. "This is not right of you, my child!"

"Do not blame her," said Rodin. "First of all, she did not know that her sister was in distress, and, secondly, she could not ask you, my dear young lady, to interest yourself about her."

As Mdlle. de Cardoville looked at Rodin with astonish-

ment, he added, again speaking to the hunchback: "Is not that true, my dear girl!"

"Yes, sir," said the sempstress, casting down her eyes and blushing. Then she added, hastily and anxiously: "But when did you see my sister, sir? where is she? how did she fall into distress?"

"All that would take too long to tell you, my dear girl; but go as soon as possible to the greengrocer's in the Rue Clovis, and ask to speak to your sister as from M. Charlemagne or M. Rodin, which you please, for I am equally well known in that house by my Christian name as by my surname, and then you will learn all about it. Only tell your sister, that, if she behaves well, and keeps to her good resolutions, there are some who will continue to look after her."

More and more surprised, Mother Bunch was about to answer Rodin, when the door opened, and M. de Gernande entered. The countenance of the magistrate was grave and sad.

"Marshal Simon's daughters!" cried Mdlle. de Cardoville.

"Unfortunately, they are not with me," answered the judge.

"Then, where are they, sir? What have they done with them? The day before yesterday, they were in the convent!" cried Dagobert, overwhelmed by this complete destruction of his hopes.

Hardly had the soldier pronounced these words, when, profiting by the impulse which gathered all the actors in this scene about the magistrate, Rodin withdrew discreetly towards the door, and disappeared without any one perceiving his absence. Whilst the soldier, thus suddenly thrown back to the depths of his despair, looked at M. de Gernande, waiting with anxiety for the answer, Adrienne said to the magistrate: "But, sir, when you applied at the convent, what explanation did the superior give on the subject of these young girls?"

"The lady superior refused to give any explanation, madame. 'You pretend,' said she, 'that the young persons of whom you speak are detained here against their will. Since the law gives you the right of entering this house, make your search.' 'But, madame, please to answer me positively,' said I to the superior; 'do you declare, that you know nothing of the young girls, whom I have come to claim.' 'I have nothing to say on this subject, sir. You

assert, that you are authorized to make a search; make it.' Not being able to get any other explanation," continued the magistrate, "I searched all parts of the convent, and had every door opened—but, unfortunately, I could find no trace of these young ladies."

"They must have sent them elsewhere," cried Dagobert; "who knows?—perhaps, ill. They will kill them—O God! they will kill them!" cried he, in a heart-rending tone.

"After such a refusal, what is to be done? Pray, sir, give us your advice; you are our providence," said Adrienne, turning to speak to Rodin, who she fancied was behind her. "What is your——"

Then, perceiving that the Jesuit had suddenly disappeared, she said to Mother Bunch, with uneasiness: "Where is M. Rodin?"

"I do not know, madame," answered the girl, looking round her; "he is no longer here."

"It is strange," said Adrienne, "to disappear so abruptly!"

"I told you he was a traitor!" cried Dagobert, stamping with rage; "they are all in a plot together."

"No, no," said Mdlle. de Cardoville; "do not think that. But the absence is not the less to be regretted, for, under these difficult circumstances, he might have given us very useful information, thanks to the position he occupied at M. d'Aigrigny's."

"I confess, madame, that I rather reckoned upon it," said M. de Gernande; "and I returned hither, not only to inform you of the fruitless result of my search, but also to seek from the upright and honorable man, who so courageously unveiled these odious machinations, the aid of his counsels in this contingency."

Strangely enough, for the last few moments Dagobert was so completely absorbed in thought, that he paid no attention to the words of the magistrate, however important to him. He did not even perceive the departure of M. de Gernande, who retired after promising Adrienne that he would neglect no means to arrive at the truth, in regard to the disappearance of the orphans. Uneasy at this silence, wishing to quit the house immediately, and induce Dagobert to accompany her, Adrienne, after exchanging a rapid glance with Mother Bunch, was advancing towards the soldier, when hasty steps were heard from without the chamber, and a manly sonorous voice, exclaiming with impatience, "Where is he—where is he?"

At the sound of this voice, Dagobert seemed to rouse him-

self with a start, made a sudden bound, and with a loud cry, rushed towards the door. It opened. Marshal Simon appeared on the threshold!

CHAPTER XXXIX.

PIERRE SIMON.

Marshal Pierre Simon, Duke de Ligny, was a man of tall stature, plainly dressed in a blue frock-coat, buttoned up to the throat, with a red ribbon tied to the top buttonhole. You could not have wished to see a more frank, honest, and chivalrous cast of countenance than the marshal's. He had a broad forehead, an aquiline nose, a well formed chin, and a complexion bronzed by exposure to the Indian sun. His hair, cut very short, was inclined to gray about the temples; but his eyebrows were still as black as his large, hanging moustache. His walk was free and bold, and his decided movements showed his military impetuosity. A man of the people, a man of war and action, the frank cordiality of his address invited friendliness and sympathy. As enlightened as he was intrepid, as generous as he was sincere, his manly, plebeian pride was the most remarkable part of his character. As others are proud of their high birth, so was he of his obscure origin, because it was ennobled by the fine qualities of his father, the rigid republican, the intelligent and laborious artisan, who, for the space of forty years, had been the example and the glory of his fellow-workmen. In accepting with gratitude the aristocratic title which the Emperor had bestowed upon him, Pierre Simon acted with that delicacy which receives from a friendly hand a perfectly useless gift, and estimates it according to the intention of the giver. The religious veneration of Pierre Simon for the Emperor had never been blind; in proportion as his devotion and love for his idol were instructive and necessary, his admiration was serious, and founded upon reason. Far from resembling those swashbucklers who love fighting for its own sake, Marshal Simon not only admired his hero as the greatest captain in the world, but he admired him, above all, because he knew that the Emperor had only accepted war in the hope of one day being able to dictate universal peace; for if peace obtained by glory and strength is great, fruitful, and magnifi-

cent, peace yielded by weakness and cowardice is sterile, disastrous, and dishonoring. The son of a workman, Pierre Simon still further admired the Emperor, because that imperial parvenu had always known how to make that popular heart beat nobly, and, remembering the people, from the masses of whom he first arose, had invited them fraternally to share in regal and aristocratic pomp.

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When Marshal Simon entered the room, his countenance was much agitated. At sight of Dagobert, a flash of joy illumined his features; he rushed towards the soldier, extending his arms, and exclaimed, "My friend! my old friend!"

Dagobert answered this affectionate salute with silent emotion. Then the marshal, disengaging himself from his arms, and fixing his moist eyes upon him, said to him in so agitated a voice that his lips trembled, "Well, didst arrive in time for the 13th of February?"

"Yes, general; but everything is postponed for four months."

"And—my wife?—my child?" At this question Dagobert shuddered, hung down his head, and was silent.

"They are not, then, here?" asked Simon, with more surprise than uneasiness. "They told me they were not at your house, but that I should find you here—and I came immediately. Are they not with you?"

"General," said Dagobert, becoming deadly pale; "general——" Drying the drops of cold sweat that stood upon his forehead, he was unable to articulate a word, for his voice was checked in his parched throat.

"You frighten me!" exclaimed Pierre Simon, becoming pale as the soldier, and seizing him by the arm.

At this, Adrienne advanced, with a countenance full of grief and sympathy; seeing the cruel embarrassment of Dagobert, she wished to come to his assistance, and she said to Pierre Simon, in a mild but agitated voice, "Marshal, I am Mdlle. de Cardoville—a relation of your dear children."

Pierre Simon turned around suddenly, as much struck with the dazzling beauty of Adrienne as with the words she had just pronounced. He stammered out in his surprise, "You, madame—a relation—of *my children!*"

He laid a stress on the last words, and looked at Dagobert in a kind of stupor.

"Yes, marshal—*your children*," hastily replied Adrienne; "and the love of those charming twin sisters——"

"Twin sisters!" cried Pierre Simon, interrupting Mdlle. de Cardoville, with an outburst of joy impossible to describe. "Two daughters instead of one! Oh! what happiness for their mother! Pardon me, madame, for being so impolite," he continued; "and so little grateful for what you tell me. But you will understand it; I have been seventeen years without seeing my wife; I come, and I find three loved beings, instead of two. Thanks, madame: would I could express all the gratitude I owe you! You are our relation: this is no doubt your house; my wife and children are with you. Is it so? You think that my sudden appearance might be prejudicial to them? I will wait—but, madame, you, that I am certain are good as fair—pity my impatience—will make haste to prepare them to receive me——"

More and more agitated, Dagobert avoided the marshal's gaze, and trembled like a leaf. Adrienne cast down her eyes without answering. Her heart sunk within her, at thought of dealing the terrible blow to Marshal Simon.

The latter, astonished at this silence, looking at Adrienne, then at the soldier, became first uneasy, and at last alarmed. "Dagobert!" he exclaimed, "something is concealed from me!"

"General!" stammered the soldier, "I assure you—I—I——"

"Madame!" cried Pierre Simon, "I conjure you, in pity, speak to me frankly!—my anxiety is horrible. My first fears return upon me. What is it? Are my wife and daughters ill? Are they in danger? Oh! speak! speak!"

"Your daughters, marshal," said Adrienne, "have been rather unwell, since their long journey—but they are in no danger."

"Oh, heaven! it is my wife!"

"Have courage, sir!" said Mdlle. de Cardoville, sadly. "Alas! you must seek consolation in the affection of the two angels that remain to you."

"General!" said Dagobert, in a firm grave tone, "I returned from Siberia—alone with your two daughters."

"And their mother! their mother!" cried Simon, in a voice of despair.

"I set out with the two orphans the day after her death," said the soldier.

"Dead?" exclaimed Pierre Simon, overwhelmed by the stroke; "dead?" A mournful silence was the only answer. The marshal staggered beneath this unexpected shock, leaned on the back of a chair for support, and then, sinking

into the seat, concealed his face with his hands. For some minutes nothing was heard but stifled sobs, for not only had Pierre Simon idolized his wife, but by one of those singular compromises, that a man long cruelly tried sometimes makes with destiny, Pierre Simon, with the fatalism of loving souls, thought he had a right to reckon upon happiness after so many years of suffering, and had not for a moment doubted that he should find his wife and child—a double consolation reserved to him after going through so much. Very different from certain people, whom the habit of misfortune renders less exacting, Simon had reckoned upon happiness as complete as had been his misery. His wife and child were the sole, indispensable conditions of this felicity, and, had the mother survived her daughters, she would have no more replaced them in his eyes than they did her. Weakness or avarice of the heart, so it was; we insist upon this singularity, because the consequences of these incessant and painful regrets exercised a great influence on the future life of Marshal Simon. Adrienne and Dagobert had respected the overwhelming grief of this unfortunate man. When he had given a free course to his tears, he raised his manly countenance, now of marble paleness, drew his hand across his blood-shot eyes, rose, and said to Adrienne, "Pardon me, madame; I could not conquer my first emotion. Permit me to retire. I have cruel details to ask of the worthy friend who only quitted my wife at the last moment. Have the kindness to let me see my children —my poor orphans!——" And the marshal's voice again broke.

"Marshal," said Mdlle. de Cardoville, "just now we were expecting your dear children: unfortunately, we have been deceived in our hopes." Pierre Simon first looked at Adrienne without answering, as if he had not heard or understood.——"But console yourself," resumed the young girl; "we have yet no reason to despair."

"To despair?" repeated the marshal, mechanically, looking by turns at Mdlle. de Cardoville and Dagobert; "to despair?—of what, in heaven's name?"

"Of seeing your children, marshal," said Adrienne; "the presence of their father will facilitate the search."

"The search!" cried Pierre Simon. "Then, my daughters are not here?"

"No, sir," said Adrienne, at length; "they have been taken from the affectionate care of the excellent man who brought them from Russia, to be removed to a convent,"

"Wretch!" cried Pierre Simon, advancing towards Dagobert, with a menacing and terrible aspect; "you shall answer to me for all!"

"Oh, sir, do not blame him!" cried Mdlle. de Cardoville.

"General," said Dagobert, in a tone of mournful resignation, "I merit your anger. It is my fault. Forced to absent myself from Paris, I entrusted the children to my wife; her confessor turned her head, and persuaded her that your daughters would be better in a convent than at our house. She believed him, and let them be conveyed there. Now they say at the convent, that they do not know where they are. This is the truth: do what you will with me; I have only to silently endure."

"This is infamous!" cried Pierre Simon, pointing to Dagobert, with a gesture of despairing indignation. "In whom can a man confide, if he has deceived me? Oh, my God!"

"Stay, marshal! do not blame him," repeated Mdlle. de Cardoville; "do not think so! He has risked life and honor to rescue your children from the convent. He is not the only one who has failed in this attempt. Just now, a magistrate—despite his character and authority—was not more successful. His firmness towards the superior, his minute search of the convent, were all in vain. Up to this time, it has been impossible to find these unfortunate children."

"But where's this convent!" cried Marshal Simon, raising his head, his face all pale and agitated with grief and rage. "Where is it? Do these vermin know what a father is, deprived of his children? At the moment when Marshal Simon, turning towards Dagobert, pronounced these words, Rodin, holding Rose and Blanche by the hand, appeared at the open door of the chamber. On hearing the marshal's exclamation, he started with surprise, and a flash of diabolical joy lit up his grim countenance—for he had not expected to meet Pierre Simon so opportunely.

Mdlle. de Cardoville was the first to perceive the presence of Rodin. She exclaimed, as she hastened towards him: "Oh! I was not deceived. He is still our providence."

"My poor children!" said Rodin, in a low voice, to the young girls, as he pointed to Pierre Simon, "this is your father!"

"Sir!" cried Adrienne, following close upon Rose and Blanche. "Your children are here!"

As Simon turned round abruptly, his two daughters threw

themselves into his arms. Here was a long silence, broken only by sobs, and kisses, and exclamations of joy.

"Come forward, at least, and enjoy the good you have done!" said Mdlle. de Cardoville, drying her eyes, and turning towards Rodin, who, leaning against the door, seemed to contemplate this scene with deep emotion.

Dagobert, at sight of Rodin bringing back the children, was at first struck with stupor, and unable to move a step; but, hearing the words of Adrienne, and yielding to a burst of almost insane gratitude, he threw himself on his knees before the Jesuit, joined his hands together, and exclaimed in a broken voice: "You have saved me, by bringing back these children."

"Oh, bless you, sir!" said Mother Bunch, yielding to the general current.

"My good friends, this is too much," said Rodin, as if his emotions were beyond his strength; "this is really too much for me. Excuse me to the marshal, and tell him that I am repaid by the sight of his happiness."

"Pray, sir," said Adrienne, "let the marshal at least have the opportunity to see and know you."

"Oh, remain! you that have saved us all!" cried Dagobert, trying to stop Rodin.

"Providence, you know, my dear young lady, does not trouble itself about the good that is done, but the good that remains to do," said Rodin, with an accent of playful kindness. "Must I not think of Prince Djalma? My task is not finished, and moments are precious. Come," he added, disengaging himself gently from Dagobert's hold, "come—the day has been as good a one as I had hoped. The Abbé d'Aigrigny is unmasked; you are free, my dear young lady; you have recovered your cross, my brave soldier; Mother Bunch is sure of a protectress; the marshal has found his children. I have my share in all these joys; it is a full share—my heart is satisfied. Adieu, my friends, till we meet again." So saying, Rodin waved his hand affectionately to Adrienne, Dagobert, and the hunchback, and withdrew, waving his hand with a look of delight on Marshal Simon, who, seated between his daughters, held them in his arms, and covered them with tears and kisses, remaining quite indifferent to all that was passing around him.

An hour after this scene, Mdlle. de Cardoville and the sempstress, Marshal Simon, his two daughters and Dagobert quitted Dr. Beleinier's asylum.

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In terminating this episode, a few words by way of moral, with regard to lunatic asylums and convents may not be out of place. We have said, and we repeat, that the laws which apply to the superintendence of lunatic asylums appear to us insufficient. Facts that have recently transpired before the courts, and other facts that have been privately communicated to us, evidently prove this insufficiency. Doubtless, magistrates have full power to visit lunatic asylums. They are even required to make such visits. But we know, from the best authority, that the numerous and pressing occupations of magistrates, whose number is often out of proportion with the labor imposed upon them, render these inspections so rare, that they are, so to speak, illusory. It appears, therefore, to us advisable to institute a system of inspections, at least twice a month, especially designed for lunatic asylums, and entrusted to a physician and a magistrate, so that every complaint may be submitted to a double examination. Doubtless, the law is sufficient when its ministers are fully informed; but how many formalities, how many difficulties must be gone through, before they can be so, particularly when the unfortunate creature who needs their assistance, already suspected, isolated, and imprisoned, has no friend to come forward in defence, and demand, in his or her name, the protection of the authorities! Is it not imperative, therefore, on the civil power, to meet these necessities by a periodical and well-organized system of inspection?

What we here say of lunatic asylums will apply with still greater force to convents for women, seminaries, and houses inhabited by religious bodies. Recent and notorious facts, with which all France has rung, have unfortunately proved that violence, forcible detention, barbarous usage, abduction of minors, and illegal imprisonment, accompanied by torture, are occurrences which, if not frequent, are at least possible in religious houses. It required singular accidents, audacious and cynical brutalities, to bring these detestable actions to public knowledge. How many other victims have been, and, perhaps still are, entombed in those large silent mansions, where no profane look may penetrate, and which, through the privileges of the clergy, escape the superintendence of the civil power. Is it not deplorable that these dwellings should not also be subject to periodical inspection, by visitors consisting, if it be desired, of a priest, a magistrate, and some delegate of the municipal authorities? If nothing takes place, but what is legal, human, and char-

itable, in these establishments, which have all the character, and incur all the responsibility, of public institutions, why this resistance, this furious indignation of the church party, when any mention is made of touching what they call their privileges? There is something higher than the constitutions devised at Rome. We mean the Law of France—the common law—which grants to all protection, but which, in return, exacts from all respect and obedience.

CHAPTER XL.

THE EAST INDIAN IN PARIS.

Since three days, Mdlle. de Cardoville had left Dr. Beleinier's. The following scene took place in a little dwelling in the Rue Blanche, to which Djalma had been conducted in the name of his unknown protector. Fancy to yourself a pretty, circular apartment, hung with Indian drapery, with purple figures on a gray ground, just relieved by a few threads of gold. The ceiling, towards the centre, is concealed by similar hangings, tied together by a thick, silken cord; the two ends of this cord, unequal in length, terminated, instead of tassels, in two tiny Indian lamps of gold filigreed-work, marvellously finished. By one of those ingenious combinations, so common in barbarous countries, these lamps served also to burn perfumes. Plates of blue crystal, let in between the openings of the arabesque, and illumined by the interior light, shone with so limpid an azure, that the golden lamps seemed starred with transparent sapphires. Light clouds, of whitish vapor rose incessantly from these lamps, and spread all around their balmy odor.

Daylight was only admitted to this room (it was about two o'clock in the afternoon) through a little greenhouse, on the other side of a door of plate-glass, made to slide into the thickness of the wall, by means of a groove. A Chinese shade was arranged so as to hide or replace this glass at pleasure. Some dwarf palm trees, plantains, and other Indian productions, with thick leaves of a metallic green, arranged in clusters in this conservatory, formed, as it were, the background to two large variegated bushes of exotic flowers, which were separated by a narrow path, paved with yellow and blue Japanese tiles, running to the foot of the

glass. The daylight, already much dimmed by the leaves through which it passed, took a hue of singular mildness as it mingled with the azure lustre of the perfumed lamps, and the crimson brightness of the fire in the tall chimney of oriental porphyry. In the obscurity of this apartment, impregnated with sweet odors and the aromatic vapor of Persian tobacco, a man with brown, hanging locks, dressed in a long robe of dark green, fastened round the waist by a parti-colored sash, was kneeling upon a magnificent Turkey carpet, filling the golden bowl of a hookah; the long, flexible tube of this pipe, after rolling its folds upon the carpet, like a scarlet serpent with silver scales, rested between the slender fingers of Djalma, who was reclining negligently on a divan. The young prince was bareheaded; his jet-black hair, parted on the middle of his forehead, streamed waving about his face and neck of antique beauty—their warm transparent colors resembling amber or topaz. Leaning his elbow on a cushion, he supported his chin with the palm of his right hand. The flowing sleeve of his robe, falling back from his arm, which was round as that of a woman, revealed mysterious signs formerly tattooed there in India by a Thug's needle. The son of Radja-sing held in his left hand the amber mouthpiece of his pipe. His robe of magnificent cashmere, with a border of a thousand hues, reaching to his knee, was fastened about his slim and well-formed figure by the large folds of an orange-colored shawl. This robe was half withdrawn from one of the elegant legs of this Asiatic Antinous, clad in a kind of very close fitting gaiter of crimson velvet, embroidered with silver, and terminating in a small white morocco slipper, with a scarlet heel. At once mild and manly, the countenance of Djalma was expressive of that melancholy and contemplative calmness habitual to the Indian and the Arab, who possess the happy privilege of uniting, by a rare combination, the meditative indolence of the dreamer with the fiery energy of the man of action—now delicate, nervous, impressionable as women—now determined, ferocious, and sanguinary as bandits.

And this semi-feminine comparison, applicable to the moral nature of the Arab and the Indian, so long as they are not carried away by the ardor of battle and the excitement of carnage, is almost equally applicable to their physical constitution; for if, like women of good blood, they have small extremities, slender limbs, fine and supple forms, this delicate and often charming exterior always covers muscles of steel, full of an elasticity, and vigor truly masculine.

Djalma's oblong eyes, like black diamonds set in bluish mother-of-pearl, wandered mechanically from the exotic flowers to the ceiling; from time to time he raised the amber mouthpiece of the hookah to his lips; then, after a slow aspiration, half opening his rosy lips, strongly contrasted with the shining enamel of his teeth, he sent forth a little spiral line of smoke, freshly scented by the rose-water through which it had passed.

"Shall I put more tobacco in the hookah?" said the kneeling figure, turning towards Djalma, and revealing the marked and sinister features of Faringhea the Strangler.

The young prince remained dumb, either that, from an oriental contempt for certain races, he disdained to answer the half-caste, or that, absorbed in his reverie, he did not even hear him. The Strangler became again silent; crouching cross-legged upon the carpet, with his elbows resting on his knees, and his chin upon his hands, he kept his eyes fixed on Djalma, and seemed to await the reply or the orders of him whose sire had been surnamed the Father of the Generous. How had Faringhea, the sanguinary worshipper of Bowanee, the Divinity of Murder, been brought to seek or to accept such humble functions? How came this man, possessed of no vulgar talents, whose passionate eloquence and ferocious energy had recruited many assassins for the service of the Good Work, to resign himself to so base a condition? Why, too, had this man, who, profiting by the young prince's blindness with regard to himself, might have so easily sacrificed him as an offering to Bowanee—why had he spared the life of Radja-sing's son? Why, in fine, did he expose himself to such frequent encounters with Rodin, whom he had only known under the most unfavorable auspices? The sequel of this story will answer all these questions. We can only say at present, that, after a long interview with Rodin, two nights before, the Thug had quitted him with downcast eyes and cautious bearing.

After having remained silent for some time, Djalma, following with his eye the cloud of whitish smoke that he had just sent forth into space, addressed Faringhea, without looking at him, and said to him in the language, as hyperbolical as concise, of orientals: "Time passes. The old man with the good heart does not come. But he *will* come. His word *is* his word."

"His word *is* his word, my lord," repeated Faringhea, in an affirmative tone. "When he came to fetch you, three days ago, from the house whither those wretches, in further-

ance of their wicked designs, had conveyed you in a deep sleep—after throwing me, your watchful and devoted servant, into a similar state—he said to you: 'The unknown friend, who sent for you to Cardoville Castle, bids me come to you, prince. Have confidence, and follow me. A worthy abode is prepared for you.'—And again, he said to you, my lord: 'Consent not to leave the house, until my return. Your interest requires it. In three days you will see me again, and then be restored to perfect freedom.' You consented to those terms, my lord, and for three days you have not left the house."

"And I wait for the old man with impatience," said Djalma, "for this solitude is heavy with me. There must be so many things to admire in Paris. Above all——"

Djalma did not finish the sentence, but relapsed into a reverie. After some moments' silence, the son of Radjasing said suddenly to Faringhea, in the tone of an impatient yet indolent sultan: "Speak to me!"

"Of what shall I speak, my lord?"

"Of what you will," said Djalma, with careless contempt, as he fixed on the ceiling his eyes, half-veiled with languor. "One thought pursues me—I wish to be diverted from it. Speak to me."

Faringhea threw a piercing glance on the countenance of the young Indian, and saw that his cheeks were colored with a slight blush. "My lord," said the half-caste, "I can guess your thought."

Djalma shook his head, without looking at the Strangler. The latter resumed: "You are thinking of the women of Paris, my lord."

"Be silent, slave!" said Djalma, turning abruptly on the sofa, as if some painful wound had been touched to the quick. Faringhea obeyed.

After the lapse of some moments, Djalma broke forth again with impatience, throwing aside the tube of the hookah, and veiling both eyes with his hands: "Your words are better than silence. Cursed be my thoughts, and the spirit which calls up these phantoms!"

"Why should you fly these thoughts, my lord? You are nineteen years of age, and hitherto all your youth has been spent in war and captivity. Up to this time, you have remained as chaste as Gabriel, that young Christian priest, who accompanied us on our voyage."

Though Faringhea did not at all depart from his respectful deference for the prince, the latter felt that there was

something of irony in the tone of the half-caste, as he pronounced the word "chaste."

Djalma said to him with a mixture of pride and severity: "I do not wish to pass for a barbarian, as they call us, with these civilized people; therefore I glory in my chastity."

"I do not understand, my lord."

"I may perhaps love some woman, pure as was my mother when she married my father; and to ask for purity from a woman, a man must be chaste as she."

At this, Faringhea could not refrain from a sardonic smile.

"Why do you laugh, slave?" said the young prince, imperiously.

"Among civilized people, as you call them, my lord, the man who married in the flower of his innocence would be mortally wounded with ridicule."

"It is false, slave! He would only be ridiculous if he married one that was not pure as himself."

"Then, my lord, he would not only be wounded—he would be killed outright, for he would be doubly and unmercifully laughed at."

"It is false! it is false. Where did you learn all this?"

"I have seen Parisian women at the Isle of France, and at Pondicherry, my lord: moreover, I learned a good deal during our voyage; I talked with a young officer, while you conversed with the young priest."

"So, like the sultans of our harems, civilized men require of women the innocence they have themselves lost."

"They require it the more, the less they have of it, my lord."

"To require without any return, is to act as a master to his slave; by what right?"

"By the right of the strongest—as it is among us, my lord."

"And what do the women do?"—

"They prevent the men from being too ridiculous, when they marry, in the eyes of the world."

"But they kill a woman that is false?" said Djalma, raising himself abruptly, and fixing upon Faringhea a savage look, that sparkled with lurid fire.

"They kill her, my lord, as with us—when they find her out."

"Despots like ourselves! Why then do these civilized men not shut up their women, to force them to a fidelity which they do not practise?"

"Because their civilization is barbarous, and their barbarism civilized, my lord."

"All this is sad enough, if true," observed Djalma, with a pensive air, adding, with a species of enthusiasm, employing, as usual, the mystic and figurative language familiar to the people of his country; "yes, your talk afflicts me, slave—for two drops of dew blending in the cup of a flower are as hearts that mingle in a pure and virgin love; and two rays of light united in one inextinguishable flame, are as the burning and eternal joys of lovers joined in wedlock."

Djalma spoke of the pure enjoyments of the soul with inexpressible grace, yet it was when he painted less ideal happiness, that his eyes shone like stars; he shuddered slightly, his nostrils swelled, the pale gold of his complexion became vermilion, and the young prince sank into a deep reverie.

Faringhea, having remarked this emotion, thus spoke: "If, like the proud and brilliant king-bird of our woods, you prefer numerous and varied pleasures to solitary and monotonous amours—handsome, young, rich as you are, my lord, were you to seek out the seductive Parisians—voluptuous phantoms of your nights—charming tormentors of your dreams—were you to cast upon them looks bold as a challenge, supplicating as prayers, ardent as desires—do you not think that many a half-veiled eye would borrow fire from your glance? Then it would no longer be the monotonous delights of a single love, the heavy chain of our life—no, it would be the thousand pleasures of the harem—a harem peopled with free and proud beauties, whom happy love would make your slaves. So long constrained, there is no such thing as excess to you. Believe me, it would then be you, the ardent, the magnificent son of our country, that would become the love and pride of these women—the most seductive in the world, who would soon have for you no looks but those of languor and passion."

Djalma had listened to Faringhea with silent eagerness The expression of his features had completely changed; it was no longer the melancholy and dreaming youth, invoking the sacred remembrance of his mother, and finding only in the dew of heaven, in the calyx of flowers, images sufficiently pure to paint the chastity of the love he dreamed of; it was no longer even the young man, blushing with a modest ardor at the thought of the permitted joys of a legitimate union. No! the incitements of Faringhea had kindled a subterraneous fire; the inflamed countenance of Djalma, his eyes now sparkling and now veiled, his manly and sonorous respiration, announced the heat of his blood, the boiling up

of the passions, only the more energetic, that they had been hitherto restrained.

So, springing suddenly from the divan, supple, vigorous, and light as a young tiger, Djalma clutched Faringhea by the throat exclaiming: "Thy words are burning poison!"

"My lord," said Faringhea, without opposing the least resistance, "your slave is your slave." This submission disarmed the prince.

"My life belongs to you," repeated the half-caste.

"I belong to you, slave!" cried Djalma, repulsing him. "Just now, I hung upon your lips, devouring your dangerous lies."

"Lies, my lord? Only appear before these women, and their looks will confirm my words."

"These women love me!—*me*, who have only lived in war and in the woods?"

"The thought that you, so young, have already waged bloody war on men and tigers, will make them adore, my lord."

"You lie!"

"I tell you, my lord, on seeing your hand, as delicate as theirs, but which has been so often bathed in hostile blood, they will wish to caress it; and they will kiss it again, when they think that, in our forests, with loaded rifle, and a poniard between your teeth, you smiled at the roaring of lion or panther for whom you lay in wait."

"But I am a savage—a barbarian."

"And for that very reason you will have them at your feet. They will feel themselves both terrified and charmed by all the violence and fury, the rage of jealousy, the passion and the love, to which a man of your blood, your youth, your ardor must be subject. To day mild and tender, to-morrow fierce and suspicious, another time ardent and passionate, such you will be—and such you ought to be, if you wish to win them. Yes; let a kiss of rage be heard between two kisses: let a dagger glitter in the midst of caresses, and they will fall before you, palpitating with pleasure, love, and fear—and you will be to them, not a man, but a god."

"Dost think so?" cried Djalma, carried away in spite of himself by the Thug's wild eloquence.

"You know, you feel, that I speak the truth," cried the latter, extending his arm towards the young Indian.

"Why, yes!" exclaimed Djalma, his eye sparkling, his nostrils swelling, as he moved about the apartment with

savage bounds. "I know not if I possess my reason, or if I am intoxicated, but it seems to me that you speak truth. Yes, I feel that they will love me with madness and fury, because my love will be mad and furious they will tremble with pleasure and fear, because the very thought of it makes me tremble with delight and terror. Slave, it is true; there is something exciting and fearful in such a love!" As he spoke forth these words, Djalma was superb in his impetuous sensuality. It is a rare thing to see a young man arrive in his native purity, at the age in which are developed, in all their powerful energy, those admirable instincts of love, which God has implanted in the heart of his creatures, and which, repressed, disguised, or perverted, may unseat the reason, or generate mad excesses and frightful crimes—but which, directed towards a great and noble passion, may and must, by their very violence, elevate man, through devotion and tenderness, to the limits of the ideal.

"Oh! this woman—this woman, before whom I am to tremble—and who, in turn, must tremble before me—where is she?" cried Djalma, with redoubled excitement. "Shall I ever find her?"

"One is a good deal, my lord," replied Faringhea, with his sardonic coolness; "he who looks for one woman, will rarely succeed in this country; he who seeks women, is only at a loss to choose."

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As the half-caste made this impertinent answer to Djalma, a very elegant blue-and-white carriage stopped before the garden-gate of the house, which opened upon a deserted street. It was drawn by a pair of beautiful blood-horses, of a cream color, with black manes and tails. The scutcheons on the harness were of silver, as were also the buttons of the servants' livery, which was blue with white collars. On the blue hammercloth, also laced with white, as well as on the panels of the doors, were lozenge-shaped coats of arms, without crest or coronet, as usually borne by unmarried daughters of noble families. Two women were in this carriage—Mdlle. de Cardoville and Florine.

CHAPTER XLI.

RISING.

To explain the arrival of Mdlle. de Cardoville at the garden-door of the house occupied by Djalma, we must cast a retrospective glance at previous events. On leaving Doctor Baleinier's, Mdlle. de Cardoville had gone to take up her residence in the Rue d'Anjou. During the last few months of her stay with her aunt, Adrienne had secretly caused this handsome dwelling to be repaired and furnished, and its luxury and elegance were now increased by all the wonders of the lodge of Saint-Dizier House. The world found it very strange, that a lady of the age and condition of Mdlle. de Cardoville should take the resolution of living completely alone and free, and, in fact, of keeping house exactly like a bachelor, a young widow, or an emancipated minor. The world pretended not to know that Mdlle. de Cardoville possessed what is often wanting in men, whether of age or twice of age—a firm character, a lofty mind, a generous heart, strong and vigorous good sense.

Judging that she would require faithful assistance in the internal management of her house, Adrienne had written to the bailiff of Cardoville, and his wife, old family servents, to come immediately to Paris: M. Dupont thus filled the office of steward, and Mme. Dupont that of housekeeper. An old friend of Adrienne's father, the Count de Montbron, an accomplished old man, once very much in fashion, and still a connoisseur in all sorts of elegances, had advised Adrienne to act like a princess, and take an equerry; recommended for this office a man of good rearing and ripe age, who, himself an amateur in horses, had been ruined in England, at Newmarket, the Derby, and Tattersall's, and reduced, as sometimes happened to gentlemen in that country, to drive the stage-coaches, thus finding an honest method of earning his bread, and at the same time gratifying his taste for horses. Such was M. de Bonneville, M. de Montbron's choice. Both from age and habits, this equerry could accompany Mdlle. de Cardoville on horseback, and, better than any one else, superintend the stable. He accepted, therefore, the employment with gratitude, and,

thanks to his skill and attention, the equipages of Mdlle. de Cardoville were not eclipsed in style by anything of the kind in Paris. Mdlle. de Cardoville had taken back her women, Hebe, Georgette, and Florine. The latter was at first to have re-entered the service of the Princess de Saint-Dizier, to continue her part of spy for the superior of St. Mary's Convent; but, in consequence of the new direction given by Rodin to the Rennepont affair, it was decided that Florine, if possible, should return to the service of Mdlle. de Cardoville. This confidential place, enabling this unfortunate creature to render important and mysterious services to the people who held her fate in their hands, forced her to infamous treachery. Unfortunately, all things favored this machination. We know that Florine, in her interview with Mother Bunch, a few days after Mdlle. de Cardoville was imprisoned at Dr. Baleinier's, had yielded to a twinge of remorse, and given to the sempstress advice likely to be of use to Adrienne's interests—sending word to Agricola not to deliver to Madame de Saint-Dizier the papers found in the hiding-place of the pavilion, but only to entrust them to Mdlle. de Cardoville herself. The latter, afterwards informed of these details by Mother Bunch, felt a double degree of confidence and interest in Florine, took her back into her service with gratitude, and almost immediately charged her with a confidential mission—that of superintending the arrangements of the house hired for Djalma's habitation. As for Mother Bunch (yielding to the solicitations of Mdlle. de Cardoville, and finding she was no longer of use to Dagobert's wife, of whom we shall speak hereafter), she had consented to take up her abode in the hotel on the Rue d'Anjou, along with Adrienne, who, with that rare sagacity of the heart peculiar to her, entrusted the young sempstress, who served her also as a secretary, with the department of alms-giving.

Mdlle. de Cardoville had at first thought of entertaining her merely as a friend, wishing to pay homage in her person to probity with labor, resignation in sorrow, and intelligence in poverty; but, knowing the workgirl's natural dignity, she feared, with reason, that, notwithstanding the delicate circumspection with which the hospitality would be offered, Mother Bunch might perceive in it alms in disguise. Adrienne preferred, therefore, whilst she treated her as a friend, to give her a confidential employment. In this manner the great delicacy of the needlewoman would be spared, since she could earn her livelihood by performing

duties which would at the same time satisfy her praiseworthy instincts of charity. In fact, she could fulfil, better than any one, the sacred mission confided to her by Adrienne. Her cruel experience in misfortune, the goodness of her angelic soul, the elevation of her mind, her rare activity, her penetration with regard to the painful secrets of poverty, her perfect knowledge of the industrial classes, were sufficient security for the tact and intelligence with which the excellent creature would second the generous intentions of Mdlle. de Cardoville.

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Let us now speak of the divers events which, on that day, preceded the coming of Mdlle. de Cardoville to the garden-gate of the house in the Rue Blanche. About ten o'clock in the morning, the blinds of Adrienne's bedchamber, closely shut, admitted no ray of daylight to this apartment, which was only lighted by a spherical lamp of oriental alabaster, suspended from the ceiling by three long silver chains. This apartment, terminating in a dome, was in the form of a tent with eight sides. From the ceiling to the floor, it was hung with white silk, covered with long draperies of muslin, fastened in large puffs to the wall, by bands caught in at regular distances by plates of ivory. Two doors, also of ivory, admirably encrusted with mother-of-pearl, led, one to the bath-room, the other to the toilet-chamber, a sort of little temple dedicated to the worship of beauty, and furnished as it had been at the pavilion of Saint-Dizier House. Two other compartments of the wall were occupied by windows, completely veiled with drapery. Opposite the bed, enclosing splendid fire-dogs of chased silver, was a chimney-piece of white marble, like crystallized snow, on which were sculptured two magnificent caryatides, and a frieze representing birds and flowers. Above this frieze, carved in open-work with extreme delicacy, was a marble basket, filled with red camellias. Their leaves of shining green, their flowers of a delicate rosy hue, were the only colors that disturbed the harmonious whiteness of this virgin retreat. Finally, half surrounded by waves of white muslin, which poured down from the dome like a mass of light clouds, the bed was visible—very low, and and resting on feet of carved ivory, which stood upon the ermine carpet that covered the floor. With the exception of a plinth, also in ivory, admirably inlaid with mother-of-pearl, the bed was entirely covered with white satin, wadded and quilted like an

immense scent-bag. The cambric sheets, trimmed with lace, being a little disturbed on one side, discovered the corner of a white taffety mattress, and a light counterpane of watered stuff—for an equal temperature always reigned in this apartment, warm as a fine spring day.

From a singular scruple, arising from the same sentiment which had caused Adrienne to have inscribed on a masterpiece of goldsmith's work the name of the maker instead of that of the seller, she had wished all these articles, so costly and sumptuous, to be manufactured by workmen chosen amongst the most intelligent, honest, and industrious of their class, whom she had supplied with the necessary materials. In this manner she had been able to add to the price of the work the profit usually gained by the middle man, who speculates in such labor; this notable augmentation of wages had spread happiness and comfort through a hundred necessitous families, who, blessing the munificence of Adrienne, gave her, as she said, the right to enjoy her luxury as a good action. Nothing could be fresher or more charming than the interior of this bedchamber. Mdlle. de Cardoville had just awoke; she reposed in the middle of this flood of muslin, lace, cambric, and white silk, in a position full of sweet grace. Never during the night did she cover that beautiful golden hair (a certain recipe, said the Greeks, for preserving it for a long while in magnificence). Every evening, her women arranged her long silky curls in flat tresses, forming two broad bands, which, descending sufficiently low almost entirely to conceal the small ear, the rosy lobe of which was alone visible, were joined to the large plait behind the head.

This head-dress, borrowed from Greek antiquity, set off to admiration the pure, fine features of Mdlle. de Cardoville, and made her look so much younger, that, instead of eighteen, one would hardly have given her fifteen years of age. Gathered thus closely about the temples, the hair lost its transparent and brilliant hues, and would have appeared almost brown, but for the golden tints which played here and there, amid the undulations of the tresses. Lulled in that morning torpor, the warm languor of which is so favorable to soft reveries, Adrienne leaned with her elbow on the pillow, and her head a little on one side, which displayed to advantage the ideal contour of her bared neck and shoulders; her smiling lips, moist and rosy, were, like her cheeks, cold as if they had just been bathed in ice-water; her snow-white lids half veiled the large, dark, soft eyes, which now gazed

languidly upon vacancy, and now fixed themselves with pleasure upon the rosy flowers and green leaves in the basket of camellias. Who can paint the matchless serenity of Adrienne's awaking—when the fair and chaste soul roused itself in the fair and chaste body? It was the awakening of a heart as pure as the fresh and balmy breath of youth, that made her bosom rise and fall in its white, immaculate purity. What creed, what dogma, what formula, what religious symbol, oh! paternal and divine Creator! can ever give a more complete idea of Thy harmonious and ineffable power, than the image of a young maiden awaking in the bloom of her beauty, and in all the grace of that modesty with which Thou hast endowed her, seeking, in her dreamy innocence, for the secret of that celestial instinct of love, which Thou hast placed in the bosom of all Thy creatures—oh! Thou whose love is eternal, and goodness infinite!

The confused thoughts which, since her sleep, had appeared gently to agitate Adrienne, absorbed her more and more; her head resting on her bosom, her beautiful arm upon the couch, her features without becoming precisely sad, assumed an expression of touching melancholy. Her dearest desire was accomplished; she was about to live independent and alone. But this affectionate, delicate, expansive, and marvellously complete nature, felt that God had not given her such rare treasures, to bury them in a cold and selfish solitude. She felt how much that was great and beautiful might be inspired by love, both in herself, and in him that should be worthy of her. Confiding in her courage, and the nobleness of her character, proud of the example that she wished to give to other women, knowing that all eyes would be fixed enviously upon her, she felt, as it were, only too sure of herself; far from fearing that she should make a bad choice, she rather feared, that she should not find any from whom to choose, so pure and perfect was her taste. And, even had she met with her own ideal, she had views so singular and so just, so extraordinary and yet so sensible, with regard to the independence and dignity of woman, that, inexorably determined to make no concession upon this head, she asked herself if the man of her choice would ever accept the hitherto unheard-of conditions that she meant to impose. In recalling to her remembrance the possible suitors that she had met in the world, she remembered also the dark, but true picture, which Rodin had drawn with so much caustic bitterness. She remembered, too, not with-

out a certain pride, the encouragement this man had given her, not by flattery, but by advising her to follow out and accomplish a great, generous, and beautiful design. The current or the caprice of fancy soon brought Adrienne to think of Djalma. Whilst she congratulated herself on having paid to her royal kinsman the duties of a kingly hospitality, the young lady was far from regarding the prince as the hero of her future.

And first she said to herself, not unreasonably, that this half-savage boy, with passions, if not untamable, yet untamed, transported on a sudden into the midst of a refined civilization, would be inevitably destined to fiery trials and violent transformations. Now Mdlle. de Cardoville, having nothing masculine or despotic in her character, had no wish to civilize the young savage. Therefore, notwithstanding the interest, or rather because of the interest, which she felt for the young Indian, she was firmly resolved, not to make herself known to him, till after the lapse of two or three months; and she determined also, that, even if Djalma should learn by chance that she was his relation, she would not receive his visit. She desired, if not to try him, at least to leave him free in all his acts, so that he might expend the first fire of his passions, good or bad. But not wishing to abandon him quite without defence to the perils of a Parisian life, she requested the Count de Montbron, in confidence, to introduce Prince Djalma to the best company in Paris, and to enlighten him by the counsels of his long experience. M. de Montbron had received the request of Mdlle. de Cardoville with the greatest pleasure, taking delight, he said in starting his royal tiger in drawing-rooms, and bringing him into contact with the flower of the fine ladies and gentlemen of Paris, offering at the same time to wager any amount in favor of his half-savage pupil.

"As for myself, my dear Count," said Adrienne to M. de Montbron, with her usual frankness, "my resolution is not to be shaken. You have told me the effect that will be produced in the fashionable world, by the first appearance of Prince Djalma, an Indian nineteen years of age, of surprising beauty, proud and wild as a young lion arriving from his forest; it is new, it is extraordinary, you added; and, therefore, all the coquetries of civilized life will pursue him with an eagerness which makes me tremble for him. Now, seriously, my dear count, it will not suit me to appear as the rival of so many fine ladies, who are about to expose themselves intrepidly to the claws of the young tiger. I take great

interest in him, because he is my cousin, because he is handsome, because he is brave, and above all because he does not wear that horrible European dress. No doubt these are rare qualities—but not sufficient to make me change my mind. Besides, the good old philosopher, my new friend, has given me advice about this Indian, which you, my dear Count, who are not a philosopher, will yet approve. It is, for some time, to receive visits at home, but not to visit other people—which will spare me the awkwardness of meeting my royal cousin, and allow me to make a careful choice, even amongst my usual society. As my house will be an excellent one, my position most unusual, and as I shall be suspected of all sorts of naughty secrets, I shall be in no want of inquisitive visitors, who will amuse me a good deal, I assure you."

And as M. de Montbron asked, if the exile of the poor young Indian tiger was to last long, Adrienne answered: "As I shall see most of the persons, to whom you will introduce him, I shall be pleased to hear different opinions about him. If certain men speak well of him, and certain women ill, I shall have good hope of him. In a word, the opinion that I come to, in sifting the true from the false (you may leave that to my sagacity), will shorten or prolong the exile of my royal cousin."

Such were the formal intentions of Mdlle. de Cardoville with regard to Djalma, even on the day she went with Florine to the house he occupied. In a word, she had positively resolved not to be known to him for some months to come.

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After long reflecting that morning, on the chances that might yet offer themselves to satisfy the wants of her heart, Adrienne fell into a new, deep reverie. This charming creature, so full of life and youth, heaved a low sigh, raised her arms above her head, turned her profile towards the pillow, and remained for some moments as if powerless and vanquished. Motionless beneath the white tissues that wrapped her round, she looked like a fair, marble statue, visible beneath a light layer of snow. Suddenly, Adrienne raised herself up, drew her hand across her brow, and rang for her women. At the first silver tone of the bell, the two ivory doors opened. Georgette appeared on the threshhold of the dressing-room, from which Frisky, a little black-and-tan dog, with his golden collar, escaped with a joyful barking. Hebe appeared at the same time on the threshold

of the bath-room. At the further end of this apartment, lighted from above, might be seen upon a green mat of Spanish leather, with golden ornaments, a crystal bath in the form of a long shell. The three only divisions in this masterpiece of glass work, were concealed by the elegant device of several large reeds in silver, which rose from the wide base of the bath, also of wrought silver, representing children and dolphins playing among branches of natural coral, and azure shells. Nothing could be more pleasing than the effect of these purple reeds and ultramarine shells, upon a dull ground of silver; the balsamic vapor, which rose from the warm, limpid, and perfumed water, that filled the crystal shell, spread through the bath-room, and floated like a light cloud into the sleeping-chamber.

Seeing Hebe in her fresh and pretty costume, bringing her a long bathing-gown, hanging upon a bare and dimpled arm, Adrienne said to her: "Where is Florine, my child?"

"Madame, she went downstairs two hours ago; she was wanted for something very pressing."

"Who wanted her?"

"The young person who serves Madame as secretary. She went out this morning very early; and, as soon as she returned, she sent for Florine, who has not come back since."

"This absence no doubt relates to some important affair of my angelic minister of succor," said Adrienne, smiling, and thinking of the hunchback. Then she made a sign to Hebe to approach her bed.

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About two hours after rising, Adrienne, having had herself dressed, as usual, with rare elegance, dismissed her women, and sent for Mother Bunch, whom she treated with marked deference, always receiving her alone. The young sempstress entered hastily, with a pale, agitated contenance, and said, in a trembling voice: "Oh, madame! my presentiments were justified. You are betrayed."

"Of what presentiments do you speak, my dear child!" said Adrienne, with surprise. "Who betrays me?"

"M. Rodin!" answered the workgirl.

CHAPTER XLII.

DOUBTS.

On hearing the accusation brought against Rodin, Mdlle. de Cardoville looked at the denunciator with new astonishment. Before continuing this scene, we may say that Mother Bunch was no longer clad in her poor, old clothes, but was dressed in black, with as much simplicity as taste. The sad color seemed to indicate her renunciation of all human vanity, the eternal mourning of her heart, and the austere duties imposed upon her by her devotion to misfortune. With her black gown, she wore a large falling collar, white and neat as her little gauze cap, with its gray ribbons, which, revealing her bands of fine brown hair, set off to advantage her pale and melancholy countenance, with its soft blue eyes. Her long, delicate hands, preserved from the cold by gloves, were no longer, as formerly, of a violet hue, but of an almost transparent whiteness.

Her agitated features expressed a lively uneasiness. Extremely surprised, Mdlle. de Cardoville exclaimed: "What do you say?"

"M. Rodin betrays you, madame."

"M. Rodin? Impossible!"

"Oh, madame! my presentiments did not deceive me."

"Your presentiments?"

"The first time I saw M. Rodin, I was frightened in spite of myself. My heart sank within me, and I trembled—for you, madame."

"For me?" said Adrienne. "Why did you not tremble for yourself, my poor friend?"

"I do not know, madame; but such was my first impression. And this fear was so invincible, that, notwithstanding the kindness that M. Rodin showed my sister, he frightened me, none the less."

"That is strange. I can understand as well as any one the almost irresistible influence of sympathies or aversions; but, in this instance——. However," resumed Adrienne, after a moment's reflection, "no matter for that; how have these suspicions been changed to certainty?"

"Yesterday, I went to take to my sister Cephyse, the assistance that M. Rodin had given me, in the name of a charitable person. I did not find Cephyse at the friend's who

had taken care of her; I therefore begged the portress to inform my sister that I would call again this morning. That is what I did; but you must excuse me, madame, some necessary details."

"Speak, speak, my dear."

"The young girl who had received my sister," said Mother Bunch, with embarrassment, casting down her eyes and blushing, "does not lead a very regular life. A person, with whom she has gone on several parties of pleasure, one M. Dumoulin, had informed her of the real name of M. Rodin, who has a kind of lodging in that house, and there goes by the name of Charlemagne."

"That is just what he told us at Dr. Baleinier's; and, the day before yesterday, when I again alluded to the circumstance, he explained to me the necessity in which he was, for certain reasons, to have a humble retreat in that remote quarter—and I could not but approve of his motives."

"Well, then! yesterday, M. Rodin received a visit from the Abbé d'Aigrigny."

"The Abbé d'Aigrigny!" exclaimed Mdlle. de Cardoville.

"Yes, madame; he remained for two hours shut up with M. Rodin."

"My child, you must have been deceived."

"I was told, madame, that the Abbé d'Aigrigny had called in the morning to see M. Rodin; not finding him at home, he had left with the portress his name written on a slip of paper, with the words, "I shall return in two hours." The girl of whom I spoke, madame, had seen this slip of paper. As all that concerns M. Rodin appears mysterious enough, she had the curiosity to wait for M. d'Aigrigny in the porter's lodge, and, about two hours afterwards, he indeed returned, and saw M. Rodin."

"No, no," said Adrienne, shuddering; "it is impossible. There must be some mistake."

"I think not, madame; for, knowing how serious such a discovery would be, I begged the young girl to describe to me the appearance of M. d'Aigrigny."

"Well?"

"The Abbé d'Aigrigny, she told me, is about forty years of age. He is tall and upright, dresses plainly, but with care; has gray eyes, very large and piercing, thick eyebrows, chestnut-colored hair, a face closely shaved, and a very decided aspect."

"It is true," said Adrienne, hardly able to believe what she heard. "The description is exact."

"Wishing to have all possible details," resumed Mother Bunch, "I asked the portress if M. Rodin and the Abbé d'Aigrigny appeared to be at variance when they quitted the house? She replied no, but that the Abbé said to M. Rodin, as they parted at the door: 'I will write to you to-morrow, as agreed.'"

"Is it a dream? Good heaven!" said Adrienne, drawing her hands across her forehead in a sort of stupor. "I cannot doubt your word, my poor friend; and yet it is M. Rodin who himself sent you to that house, to give assistance to your sister: would he have wilfully laid open to you his secret interviews with the Abbé d'Aigrigny? It would have been bad policy in a traitor."

"That is true, and the same reflection occurred to me. And yet the meeting of these two men appeared so dangerous to you, madame, that I returned home full of terror."

Characters of extreme honesty are very hard to convince of the treachery of others: the more infamous the deception, the more they are inclined to doubt it. Adrienne was one of these characters, rectitude being a prime quality of her mind. Though deeply impressed by the communication, she remarked: "Come, my dear, do not let us frighten ourselves too soon, or be over-hasty in believing evil. Let us try to enlighten ourselves by reasoning, and first of all remember facts. M. Rodin opened for me the doors of Dr. Baleinier's asylum; in my presence, he brought his charge against the Abbé d'Aigrigny; he forced the superior of the convent to restore Marshal Simon's daughters, he succeeded in discovering the retreat of Prince Djalma—he faithfully executed my intentions with regard to my young cousin; only yesterday, he gave me the most useful advice. All this is true—is it not?"

"Certainly, madame."

"Now suppose that M. Rodin, putting things in their worst light, had some after-thought—that he hopes to be liberally rewarded, for instance; hitherto, at least, he has shown complete disinterestedness.

"That also is true, madame," said poor Mother Bunch, obliged, like Adrienne, to admit the evidence of fixed facts.

"Now let us look to the possibility of treachery. Unite with the Abbé d'Aigrigny to betray me! Betray *me?*—how? and for what purpose? What have I to fear? Is it not the Abbé d'Aigrigny, on the contrary, is it not Madame de Saint-Dizier, who have to render an account for the injuries they have done me?"

"But, then, madame, how do you explain the meeting of these two men, who have so many motives for mutual aversion? May there not be some dark project still behind? Besides, madame, I am not the only one to think so."

"How is that?"

"This morning, on my return, I was so much agitated, that Mdlle. Florine asked me the cause of my trouble. I know, madame, how much she is devoted to you."

"Nobody could be more so; only recently, you yourself informed me of the signal service she rendered, during my confinement at Dr. Baleinier's."

"Well, madame, this morning, on my return, thinking it necessary to have you informed as soon as possible, I told all to Mdlle. Florine. Like me—even more, perhaps—she was terrified at the meeting of Rodin and M. d'Aigrigny. After a moment's reflection, she said to me: "It is, I think, useless to disturb my mistress at present; it can be of no importance whether she is informed of this treachery two or three hours sooner or later; during that time I may be able to discover something more. I have an idea, which I think a good one. Make my excuses to my mistress; I shall soon be back." Then Florine sent for a hackney-coach, and went out."

"Florine is an excellent girl," said Mdlle. de Cardoville, with a smile, for further reflection had quite reassured her; "but, on this occasion, I think that her zeal and good heart have deceived her, as they have you, my poor friend. Do you know, that we are two madcaps, you and I, not to have thought of one thing, which would have put us quite at our ease?"

"How so, madame?"

"The Abbé d'Aigrigny fears M. Rodin; he may have sought him out, to entreat his forbearance. Do you not find this explanation both satisfactory and reasonable?"

"Perhaps so, madame," said Mother Bunch, after a moment's reflection; "yes, it is probable." But after another silence, and as if yielding to a conviction superior to every possible argument, she exclaimed: "And yet, no; believe me, madame, you are deceived. I feel it. All appearances may be against what I affirm; yet, believe me, these presentiments are too strong not to be true. And have you not guessed the most secret instincts of my heart? why should I not be able to guess the dangers with which you are menaced?"

"What do you say? what have I guessed?" replied Mdlle.

de Cardoville, involuntarily impressed by the other's tone of conviction and alarm.

"What have you guessed?" resumed the latter. "All the troublesome susceptibility of an unfortunate creature, to whom destiny has decreed a life apart. If I have hitherto been silent, it is not from ignorance of what I owe you. Who told you, madame, that the only way to make me accept your favors without blushing, was to give me some employment, that would enable me to soothe the misfortunes I had so long shared? Who told you, when you wished me to have a seat at your table, and to treat as your friend the poor needlewoman, in whose person you sought to honor resignation and honest industry—who told you, when I answered with tears of gratitude and regret, that it was not false modesty, but a consciousness of my own ridiculous deformity, that made me refuse your offer? Who told you that, but for this, I should have accepted it proudly, in the name of all my low-born sisters? But you replied to me with the touching words: 'I understand your refusal, my friend; it is not occasioned by false modesty, but by a sentiment of dignity that I love and respect.' Who told you," continued the workgirl, with increasing animation, "that I should be so happy to find a little solitary retreat in this magnificent house, which dazzles me with its splendor? Who guided you in the choice of the apartment (still far too good) that you have provided for me? Who taught you, that, without envying the beauty of the charming creatures that surround you, and whom I love because they love you, I should always feel, by an involuntary comparison, embarrassed and ashamed before them? Who told you therefore to send them away, whenever you wished to speak with me? Yes! who has revealed to you all the painful and secret susceptibilities of a position like mine! Who has revealed them to you? God, no doubt! who in his infinite majesty creates worlds, and yet cares for the poor little insect hidden beneath the grass. And you think, that the gratitude of a heart you have understood so well, cannot rise in its turn to the knowledge of what may be hurtful to you? No, no, lady; some people have the instinct of self-preservation; others have the still more precious instinct that enables them to preserve those they love. God has given me this instinct. I tell you that you *are* betrayed!" And with animated look, and cheeks slightly colored with emotion, the speaker laid such stress upon the last words, and accompanied them with such energetic gesture, that Mdlle. de Cardoville

already shaken by the girl's warmth, began almost to share in her apprehensions. Then, although she had before learned to appreciate the superior intelligence of this poor child of the people, Mdlle. de Cardoville had never till now heard her friend express herself with so much eloquence—an eloquence, too, that was inspired by the noblest sentiments. This circumstance, added to the impression made upon Adrienne. But at the moment she was about to answer, a knock was heard at the door of the room, and Florine entered.

On seeing the alarmed countenance of her waiting-maid, Mdlle. de Cardoville said hastily: "Well, Florine! what news? Whence come you, my child?"

"From Saint-Dizier House, madame."

"And why did you go there?" asked Mdlle. de Cardoville. with surprise.

"This morning," said Florine, glancing at the workgirl, "madame, there, confided to me her suspicions and uneasiness. I shared in them. The visit of the Abbé d'Aigrigny to M. Rodin appeared to me very serious. I thought, if it should turn out that M. Rodin had been during the last few days to Saint-Dizier House, there would be no longer any doubt of his treachery."

"True," said Adrienne, more and more uneasy. "Well?"

"As I had been charged to superintend the removal from the lodge, I knew that several things had remained there. To obtain admittance, I had to apply to Mrs. Grivois. I had thus a pretext for returning to the hotel."

"What next, Florine, what next?"

"I endeavored to get Mrs. Grivois to talk of M. Rodin; but it was in vain."

"She suspected you," said the workgirl. "It was to be anticipated."

"I asked her," continued Florine, "if they had seen M. Rodin at the hotel lately. She answered evasively. Then despairing of getting anything out of her," continued Florine, "I left Mrs. Grivois, and that my visit might excite no suspicion, I went to the pavilion—when, as I turn down the avenue—whom do I see?—why, M. Rodin himself, hastening towards the little garden-door, wishing no doubt to depart unnoticed by that way."

"Madame, you hear," cried Mother Bunch, clasping her hands with a supplicating air; "such evidence should convince you."

"M. Rodin at the Princess de Saint-Dizier's!" cried Mdlle.

de Cardoville, whose glance, generally so mild, now suddenly flashed with vehement indignation. Then she added, in a tone of considerable emotion, "Continue, Florine."

"At sight of M. Rodin, I stopped," proceeded Florine, "and keeping a little on one side, I gained the pavilion without being seen. I looked out into the street, through the closed blinds, and perceived a hackney coach. It was waiting for M. Rodin, for, a minute after, he got into it, saying to the coachman, 'No. 39, Rue Blanche'——"

"The prince's!" exclaimed Mdlle. de Cardoville.

"Yes, madame."

"Yes, M. Rodin was to see him to-day," said Adrienne, reflecting.

"No doubt he betrays you, madame, and the prince also; the latter will be made his victim more easily than you."

"Shame! shame!" cried Mdlle. de Cardoville, on a sudden, as she rose, all her features contracted with painful anger. "After such a piece of treachery, it is enough to make us doubt of everything—even of ourselves."

"Oh, madame! is it not dreadful?" said Mother Bunch, shuddering.

"But, then, why did he rescue me and mine, and accuse the Abbé d'Aigrigny?" wondered Mdlle. de Cardoville. "Of a truth, it is enough to make one lose one's reason. It is an abyss—but, oh! how frightful is doubt!"

"As I returned," said Florine, casting a look of affectionate devotion on her mistress, "I thought of a way to make all clear; but there is not a minute to lose."

"What do you mean?" said Adrienne, looking at Florine with surprise.

"M. Rodin will soon be alone with the prince," said Florine.

"No doubt," replied Adrienne.

"The prince always sits in a little room that opens upon a greenhouse. It is there that he will receive M. Rodin."

"What then?" resumed Adrienne.

"This greenhouse, which I had arranged according to your orders, has only one issue—by a door leading into a little lane. The gardener gets in that way every morning, so as not to have to pass through the apartments. Having finished his work, he does not return thither during the day."

"What do you mean? what is your project?" said Adrienne, looking at Florine with growing surprise.

"The plants are so disposed, that, I think, if even the

shade were not there, which screens the glass that separates the saloon from the greenhouse, one might get near enough to hear what was passing in the room, without being seen. When I was superintending the arrangements, I always entered by this greenhouse door. The gardener had one key, and I another. Luckily, I have not yet parted with mine. Within an hour, you may know how far to trust M. Rodin. If he betrays the prince, he betrays you also."

"What say you?" cried Mdlle. de Cardoville.

"Set out instantly with me; we reach the side door; I enter alone, for precaution sake—if all is right, I return——"

"You would have *me* turn spy?" said Mdlle. de Cardoville, haughtily, interrupting Florine. "You cannot think it."

"I beg your pardon, madame," said the girl, casting down her eyes, with a confused and sorrowful air; you had suspicions, and meseems 'tis the only way to confirm or destroy them."

"Stoop to listen to a conversation—never!" replied Adrienne.

"Madame," said Mother Bunch, suddenly, after some moments' thought, "permit me to tell you that Mdlle. Florine is right. The plan proposed is a painful one, but it is the only way in which you can clear up, perhaps, for ever, your doubts as to M. Rodin. Notwithstanding the evidence of facts, in spite of the almost certainty of my presentiments, appearances may deceive us. I was the first who accused M. Rodin to you. I should not forgive myself all the rest of my life, did I accuse him wrongfully. Beyond doubt, it is painful, as you say, madame, to listen to a conversation——" Then, with a violent effort to console herself, she added, as she strove to repress her tears, "Yet, as your safety is at stake, madame—for, if this be treachery, the future prospect is dreadful—I will go in your place—to——"

"Not a word more, I entreat you," cried Mdlle. de Cardoville, interrupting. "Let you, my poor friend, do for me what I thought degrading to do myself? Never!"

Then, turning to Florine, she added, "Tell M. de Bonneville to have the carriage got ready on the instant."

"You consent, then!" cried Florine, clasping her hands, and not seeking to conceal her joy; and her eyes also became full of tears.

"Yes, I consent," answered Adrienne, with emotion. "If it is to be war—war to the knife, that they would wage with me—I must be prepared for it; and, come to think of it, it

would only be weakness and folly not to put myself on my guard. No doubt this step costs me much, and is very repugnant to me, but it is the only way to put an end to suspicions that would be a continual torment to me, and perhaps to prevent still greater evils. Yes! for many important reasons, this interview of M. Rodin with Prince Djalma may be doubly decisive to me—as to the confidence, or the inexorable hate, that I must henceforth feel for M. Rodin. So, Florine, quick!—my cloak and bonnet, and the carriage. You will go with me. As for you, my dear, pray wait for me here," she added, turning to the work-girl.

* * * * * *

Half an hour after this conversation, Adrienne's carriage stopped, as we have before seen, at the little garden-gate of the house in the Rue Blanche. Florine entered the greenhouse and soon returned to her mistress. "The shade is down, madame. M. Rodin has just entered the prince's room." Mdlle. de Cardoville was, therefore, present, though invisible, at the following scene, which took place between Rodin and Djalma.

CHAPTER XLIII.

THE LETTER.

Some minutes before the entrance of Mdlle. de Cardoville into the greenhouse, Rodin had been introduced by Faringhea into the presence of the prince, who, still under the influence of the burning excitement into which he had been plunged by the words of the half-caste, did not appear to perceive the Jesuit. The latter, surprised at the animated expression of Djalma's countenance, and his almost frantic air, made a sign of interrogation to Faringhea, who answered him privately in the following symbolical manner:—After laying his forefinger on his head and heart, he pointed to the fire burning in the chimney, signifying by his pantomimic action that the head and heart of Djalma were both in flames. No doubt Rodin understood him, for an imperceptible smile of satisfaction played upon his wan lips; then he said aloud to Faringhea, "I wish to be alone with the prince. Let down the shade, and see that we are not interrupted." The half-caste bowed, and touched a spring near the sheet of plate-glass, which slid into the wall as the blind de-

scended; then, again bowing, Faringhea left the room. It was shortly after that Mdlle. de Cardoville and Florine entered the greenhouse, which was now only separated from the room in which was Djalma, by the transparent thickness of a shade of white silk, embroidered with large colored birds. The noise of the door, which Faringhea closed as he went out, seemed to recall the young Indian to himself; his features, though still animated, recovered their habitual expressions of mildness and gentleness; he started, drew his hand across his brow, looked around him, as if waking up from a deep reverie, and then, advancing towards Rodin, with an air as respectful as confused, he said to him, using the expression commonly applied to old men in his country, "Pardon me, father." Still following the customs of his nation, so full of deference towards age, he took Rodin's hand to raise it to his lips, but the Jesuit drew back a step, and refused his homage.

"For what do you ask pardon, my dear prince?" said he to Djalma.

"When you entered, I was in a dream; I did not come to meet you. Once more, pardon me, father!"

"Once more, I forgive you with all my heart, my dear prince. But let us have some talk. Pray resume your place on the couch, and your pipe, too, if you like it."

But Djalma, instead of adopting the suggestion, and throwing himself on the divan, according to his custom, insisted on seating himself in a chair, notwithstanding all the persuasions of "the Old Man with the Good Heart," as he always called the Jesuit.

"Really, your politeness troubles me, my dear prince," said Rodin; "you are here at home in India; at least, we wish you to think so."

"Many things remind me of my country," said Djalma, in a mild, grave tone. "Your goodness reminds me of my father, and of him who was a father to me," added the Indian, as he thought of Marshal Simon, whose arrival in Paris had been purposely concealed from him.

After a moment's silence, he resumed in a tone full of affectionate warmth, as he stretched out his hand to Rodin, "You are come, and I am happy!"

"I understand your joy, my dear prince, for I come to take you out of prison—to open your cage for you. I had begged you to submit to a brief seclusion, entirely for your own interest."

"Can I go out to-morrow?"

"To-day, my dear prince, if you please."

The young Indian reflected for a moment, and then resumed, "I must have friends, since I am here in a palace that does not belong to me."

"Certainly you have friends—excellent friends," answered Rodin. At these words, Djalma's countenance seemed to acquire fresh beauty. The most noble sentiments were expressed in his fine features: his large black eyes became slightly humid, and, after another interval of silence, he rose and said to Rodin with emotion: "Come!"

"Whither, dear prince?" said the other, much surprised.

"To thank my friends. I have waited three days. It is long."

"Permit me, dear prince—I have much to tell you on this subject—please to be seated."

Djalma resumed his seat with docility. Rodin continued: "It is true that you have friends; or rather, you have a friend. Friends are rare."

"What are you?"

"Well, then, you have two friends, my dear prince—myself, whom you know, and one other, whom you do not know, and who desires to remain unknown to you."

"Why?"

"Why?" answered Rodin, after a moment's embarrassment. "Because the happiness he feels in giving you these proofs of his friendship and even his own tranquillity, depend upon preserving this mystery."

"Why should there be concealment when we do good."

"Sometimes, to conceal the good we do, my dear prince."

"I profit by this friendship; why should he conceal himself from me?" These repeated questions of the young Indian appeared to puzzle Rodin, who, however, replied: "I have told you, my dear prince, that your secret friend would perhaps have his tranquillity compromised, if he were known."

"If he were known—as my friend?"

"Exactly so, dear prince."

The countenance of Djalma immediately assumed an appearance of sorrowful dignity; he raised his head proudly, and said in a stern and haughty voice: "Since this friend hides himself from me, he must either be ashamed of me, or there is reason for me to be ashamed of him. I only accept hospitality from those who are worthy of me, and who think me worthy of them. I leave this house." So saying, Djalma rose with such an air of determination,

that Rodin exclaimed: "Listen to me, my dear prince. Allow me to tell you, that your petulance and touchiness are almost incredible. Though we have endeavored to remind you of your beautiful country, we are here in Europe, in France, in the centre of Paris. This consideration may perhaps a little modify your views. Listen to me, I conjure you."

Notwithstanding his complete ignorance of certain social conventionalisms, Djalma had too much good sense and uprightness, not to appreciate reason, when it appeared reasonable. The words of Rodin calmed him. With that ingenuous modesty, with which natures full of strength and generosity are almost always endowed, he answered mildly: "You are right, father. I am no longer in my own country. Here the customs are different. I will reflect upon it."

Notwithstanding his craft and suppleness, Rodin sometimes found himself perplexed by the wild and unforeseen ideas of the young Indian. Thus he saw, to his great surprise, that Djalma now remained pensive for some minutes, after which he resumed in a calm but firm tone: "I have obeyed you, father: I have reflected."

"Well, my dear prince?"

"In no country in the world, under no pretext, should a man of honor conceal his friendship for another man of honor."

"But suppose there should be danger in avowing this friendship?" said Rodin, very uneasy at the turn the conversation was taking. Djalma eyed the Jesuit with contemptuous astonishment, and made no reply.

"I understand your silence, my dear prince: a brave man ought to defy danger. True; but if it should be you that the danger threatens, in case this friendship were discovered, would not your man of honor be excusable, even praiseworthy, to persist in remaining unknown?"

"I accept nothing from a friend, who thinks me capable of denying him from cowardice."

"Dear prince—listen to me."

"Adieu, father."

"Yet reflect!"

"I have said it," replied Djalma, in an abrupt and almost sovereign tone, as he walked towards the door.

"But suppose a woman were concerned," cried Rodin, driven to extremity, and hastening after the young Indian, for he really feared that Djalma might rush from the house, and thus overthrow all his projects.

At the last words of Rodin the Indian stopped abruptly. "A woman!" said he, with a start, and turning red. "A woman is concerned?"

"Why, yes! suppose it were a woman," resumed Rodin, "would you not then understand her reserve, and the secrecy with which she is obliged to surround the marks of affection she wishes to give you?"

"A woman!" repeated Djalma, in a trembling voice. clasping his hands in adoration; and his beautiful countenance was expressive of the deepest emotion. "A woman!" said he again. "A Parisian?"

"Yes, my dear prince, as you force me to this indiscretion, I will confess to you that your friend is a real Parisian—a noble matron, endowed with the highest virtues—whose age alone merits all your respect."

"She is very old, then?" cried poor Djalma, whose charming dream was thus abruptly dispelled.

"She may be a few years older than I am," answered Rodin, with an ironical smile, expecting to see the young man express a sort of comical disappointment or angry regret.

But it was not so. To the passionate enthusiasm of love, which had for a moment lighted up the prince's features, there now succeeded a respectful and touching expression. He looked at Rodin with emotion, and said to him in a broken voice: "This woman is, then, a mother to me?"

It is impossible to describe with what a pious, melancholy, and tender charm the Indian uttered the word mother.

"You have it, my dear prince; this respectable lady wishes to be a mother to you. But I may not reveal to you the cause of the affection she feels for you. Only, believe me—this affection is sincere, and the cause honorable. If I do not tell you her secret, it is that, with us, the secrets of women, young or old, are equally sacred."

"That is right, and I will respect it. Without seeing her, I will love her—as I love God, without seeing Him."

"And now, my dear prince, let me tell you what are the intentions of your maternal friend. This house will remain at your disposal, as long as you like it; French servants, a carriage, and horses, will be at your orders; the charges of your housekeeping will be paid for you. Then, as the son of a king should live royally, I have left in the next room a casket containing five hundred louis; every month a similar sum will be provided: if it should not be

found sufficient for your little amusements, you will tell me, and it shall be augmented."

At a movement of Djalma, Rodin hastened to add: "I must tell you at once, my dear prince, that your delicacy may be quite at ease. First of all, you may accept anything from a mother; next, as in about three months you will come into possession of an immense inheritance, it will be easy for you, if you feel the obligation a burden—and the sum cannot exceed, at the most, four or five thousand louis—to repay these advances. Spare nothing, then, but satisfy all your fancies. You are expected to appear in the great world of Paris, in a style becoming the son of a king who was called the Father of the Generous. So once again I conjure you not to be restrained by a false delicacy; if this sum should not be sufficient——"

"I will ask for more. My mother is right; the son of a monarch ought to live royally."

Such was the answer of the Indian, made with perfect simplicity, and without any appearance of astonishment at these magnificent offers. This was natural. Djalma would have done for others what they were doing for him, for the traditions of the prodigal magnificence and splendid hospitality of Indian princes are well known. Djalma had been as moved as grateful, on hearing that a woman loved him with maternal affection. As for the luxury with which she sought to surround him, he accepted it without astonishment and without scruple. This resignation, again, somewhat disconcerted Rodin, who had prepared many excellent arguments to persuade the Indian to accept his offers.

"Well, then, it's all agreed, my dear prince," resumed the Jesuit. "Now, as you must see the world, it's just as well to enter by the best door, as we say. One of the friends of your maternal protectress, the Count de Montbron, an old nobleman of the greatest experience, and belonging to the first society, will introduce you in some of the best houses in Paris."

"Will you not introduce me, father?"

"Alas! my dear prince, look at me. Tell me, if you think I am fitted for such an office. No, no; I live alone and retired from the world. And then," added Rodin, after a short silence, fixing a penetrating, attentive, and curious look upon the prince, as if he would have subjected him to a sort of experiment by what follows; "and then, you see, M. de Montbron will be better able than I should, in the world you are about to enter, to enlighten you as to the snares that will be laid for you. For if you have friends, you have

also enemies—cowardly enemies, as you know, who have abused your confidence in an infamous manner, and have made sport of you. And as, unfortunately, their power is equal to their wickedness, it would perhaps be more prudent in you to try to avoid them—to fly, instead of resisting them openly."

At the remembrance of his enemies, at the thought of flying from them, Djalma trembled in every limb; his features became of a livid paleness; his eyes wide open, so that the pupil was encircled with white, sparkled with lurid fire; never had scorn, hatred, and the desire of vengeance, expressed themselves so terribly on a human face. His upper lip, blood-red, was curled convulsively, exposing a row of small, white, and close-set teeth, and giving to his countenance, lately so charming, an air of such animal ferocity, that Rodin started from his seat, and exclaimed: "What is the matter, prince? You frighten me."

Djalma did not answer. Half leaning forward, with his hands clinched in rage, he seemed to cling to one of the arms of the chair, for fear of yielding to a burst of terrific fury. At this moment, the amber mouthpiece of his pipe rolled, by chance, under one of his feet; the violent tension, which contracted all the muscles of the young Indian, was so powerful, and notwithstanding his youth and his light figure, he was endowed with such vigor, that with one abrupt stamp he powdered to dust the piece of amber, in spite of its extreme hardness.

"In the name of heaven, what is the matter, prince?" cried Rodin.

"Thus would I crush my cowardly enemies!" exclaimed Djalma, with menacing and excited look. Then, as if these words had brought his rage to a climax, he bounded from his seat, and, with haggard eyes, strode about the room for some seconds in all directions, as if he sought for some weapon, and uttered from time to time a hoarse cry, which he endeavored to stifle by thrusting his clinched fist against his mouth, whils this jaws moved convulsively. It was the impotent rage of a wild beast, thirsting for blood. Yet, in all this, the young Indian preserved a great and savage beauty; it was evident that these instincts of sanguinary ardor and blind intrepidity, now excited to this pitch by horror of treachery and cowardice, when applied to war, or to those gigantic Indian hunts, which are even more bloody than a battle, must make of Djalma what he really was—a hero.

Rodin admired, with deep and ominous joy, the fiery impetuosity of passion in the young Indian, for, under various conceivable circumstances, the effect must be terrible. Suddenly, to the Jesuit's great surprise, the tempest was appeased. Djalma's fury was calmed thus instantaneously, because reflection showed him how vain it was. Ashamed of his childish violence, he cast down his eyes His countenance remained pale and gloomy; and, with a cold tranquillity, far more formidable than the violence to which he had yielded, he said to Rodin: "Father, you will this day lead me to meet my enemies."

"In what end, my dear prince? What would you do?"

Kill the cowards!"

"Kill them! you must not think of it."

"Faringhea will aid me."

"Remember, you are not on the banks of the Ganges, and here one does not kill an enemy like a hunted tiger."

"One fights with a loyal enemy, but one kills a traitor like an accursed dog," replied Djalma, with as much conviction as tranquillity.

"Ah, prince, whose father was the Father of the Generous." said Rodin, in a grave voice; "what pleasure can you find in striking down creatures as cowardly as they are wicked?"

"To destroy what is dangerous, is a duty."

"So prince, you seek for revenge."

"I do not revenge myself on a serpent," said the Indian, with haughty bitterness; "I crush it."

"But, my dear prince, here we cannot get rid of our enemies in that manner. If we have cause of complaint——"

"Women and children complain," said Djalma, interrupting Rodin: "men strike."

"Still on the banks of the Ganges, my dear prince. Here, society takes your cause into its own hands, examines, judges, and if there be good reason, punishes."

"In my own quarrel, I am both judge and executioner."

"Pray listen to me: you have escaped the odious snares of your enemies, have you not?—Well! suppose it were thanks to the devotion of the venerable woman who has for you the tenderness of a mother, and that she were to ask you to forgive them—she, who saved you from their hands—what would you do then?"

The Indian hung his head, and was silent. Profiting by his hesitation, Rodin continued: "I might say to you that I know your enemies, but that in the dread of seeing you commit some terrible imprudence, I would conceal their

names from you forever. But no! I swear to you, that if the respectable person, who loves you as her son, should find it either right or useful that I should tell you their names, I will do so—until she has pronounced, I must be silent."

Djalma looked at Rodin with a dark and wrathful air. At this moment, Faringhea entered, and said to Rodin: "A man with a letter, not finding you at home, has been sent on here. Am I to receive it? He says it comes from the Abbé d'Aigringy.

"Certainly," answered Rodin. "That is, he added, with the prince's permission."

Djalma nodded in reply; Faringhea went out.

"You will excuse what I have done, dear prince. I expected this morning a very important letter. As it was late in coming to hand, I ordered it to be sent on."

A few minutes after, Faringhea returned with the letter, which he delivered to Rodin—and the half-caste again withdrew.

CHAPTER XLIV.

ADRIENNE AND DJALMA.

When Faringhea had quitted the room, Rodin took the letter from Abbé d'Aigrigny with one hand, and with the other appeared to be looking for something, first in the side pocket of his great-coat, then in the pocket behind, then in that of his trousers; and, not finding what he sought, he laid the letter on his knee, and felt himself all over with both hands, with an air of regret and uneasiness. The divers movements of this pantomime, performed in the most natural manner, were crowned by the exclamations: "Oh! dear me! how vexatious!"

"What is the matter?" asked Djalma, starting from the gloomy silence in which he had been plunged for some minutes.

"Alas! my dear prince!" replied Rodin, "the most vulgar and puerile accident may sometimes cause the greatest inconvenience. I have forgotten or lost my spectacles. Now, in this twilight, with the very poor eyesight that years of labor have left me, it will be absolutely impossible for me to read this most important letter—and an immediate answer is expected—most simple and categorical—a yes or a no. Time presses; it is really most annoying. If," added

Rodin, laying great stress on his words, without looking at Djalma, but so as the prince might remark it; "if only some one would render me the service to read it for me; but there is no one—no one!"

"Father," said Djalma, obligingly, "shall I read it for you. When I have finished it, I shall forget what I have read."

"You?" cried Rodin, as if the proposition of the Indian had appeared to him extravagant and dangerous; "it is impossible, prince, for you to read this letter."

"Then excuse my having offered," said Djalma mildly.

"And yet," resumed Rodin, after a moment's reflection, and as if speaking to himself, "why not?"

And he added, addressing Djalma: "Would you really be so obliging, my dear prince? I should not have ventured to ask you this service."

So saying, Rodin delivered the letter to Djalma, who read aloud as follows: "'Your visit this morning to Saint-Dizier House can only be considered, from what I hear, as a new act of aggression on your part.

"'Here is the last proposition I have to make. It may be as fruitless as the step I took yesterday, when I called upon you in the Rue Clovis.

"'After that long and painful explanation, I told you that I would write to you. I keep my promise, and here is my ultimatum.

"'First of all, a piece of advice. Beware! If you are determined to maintain so unequal a struggle, you will be exposed even to the hatred of those whom you so foolishly seek to protect. There are a thousand ways to ruin you with them, by enlightening them as to your projects. It will be proved to them, that you have shared in the plot, which you now pretend to reveal, not from generosity, but from cupidity.'" Though Djalma had the delicacy to feel that the least question on the subject of this letter would be a serious indiscretion, he could not forbear turning his head suddenly towards the Jesuit, as he read the last passage.

"Oh, yes! it relates to me. Such as you see me, my dear prince," added he, glancing at his shabby clothes, "I am accused of cupidity."

"And who are these people that you protect?"

"Those I protect?" said Rodin, feigning some hesitation, as if he had been embarrassed to find an answer; "who are those I protect? Hem—hem—I will tell you. They are poor devils without resources; good people without a penny,

having only a just cause on their side, in a lawsuit in which they are engaged. They are threatened with destruction by powerful parties—very powerful parties; but, happily, these latter are known to me, and I am able to unmask them. What else could have been? Being myself poor and weak, I range myself naturally on the side of the poor and weak. But continue, I beg of you."

Djalma resumed: "'You have therefore everything to fear if you persist in your hostility, and nothing to gain by taking the side of those whom you call your friends. They might more justly be termed your dupes, for your disinterestedness would be inexplicable, were it sincere. It must therefore conceal some after-thought of cupidity.

"'Well! in that view of the case, we can offer you ample compensation—with this difference, that your hopes are now entirely founded on the probable gratitude of your friends, a very doubtful chance at the best, whereas our offers will be realized on the instant. To speak clearly, this is what we ask, what we exact of you. This very night, before twelve, you must have left Paris, and engage not to return for six months.'" Djalma could not repress a movement of surprise, and looked at Rodin.

"Quite natural," said the latter; "the cause of my poor friends would be judged by that time, and I should be unable to watch over them. You see how it is, my dear prince," added Rodin, with bitter indignation. "But please continue, and excuse me for having interrupted you; though, indeed, such impudence disgusts me."

Djalma continued: "That we may be certain of your removal from Paris for six months, you will go to the house of one of our friends in Germany. You will there be received with generous hospitality, but forcibly detained until the expiration of the term.'"

"Yes, yes! a voluntary prison," said Rodin.

"'On these conditions, you will receive a pension of one thousand francs a month, to begin from your departure from Paris, ten thousand francs down, and twenty thousand at the end of the six months—the whole to be completely secured to you. Finally, at the end of the six months, we will place you in a position both honorable and independent.'"

Djalma having stopped short, with involuntary indignation, Rodin said to him: "Let me beg you to continue, my dear prince. Read to the end, and it will give you some idea of what passes in the midst of our civilization."

Djalma resumed: "'You know well enough the course of affairs, and what we are, to feel that in providing for your absence, we only wish to get rid of an enemy, not very dangerous, but rather troublesome. Do not be blinded by your first success. The results of your denunciation will be stifled, because they are calumnious. The judge who received your evidence will soon repent his odious partiality. You may make what use you please of this letter. We know what we write, to whom we write, and how we write. You will receive this letter at three o'clock; if by four o'clock we have not your full and complete acceptance, written with your own hand at the bottom of this letter, war must commence between us—and not from to-morrow, but on the instant.'"

Having finished reading the letter, Djalma looked at Rodin, who said to him: "Permit me to summon Faringhea."

He rang the bell, and the half-caste appeared. Rodin took the letter from the hands of Djalma, tore it into halves, rubbed it between his palms, so as to make a sort of a ball, and said to the half-caste, as he returned it to him: "Give this paper to the person who waits for it, and tell him that is my only answer to his shameless and insolent letter; you understand me—this shameless and insolent letter."

"I understand," said the half-caste; and he went out.

"This will perhaps be a dangerous war for you, father," said the Indian, with interest.

"Yes, dear prince, it may be dangerous, but I am not like you; I have no wish to kill my enemies, because they are cowardly and wicked. I fight them under the shield of the law. Imitate me in this." Then, seeing that the countenance of Djalma darkened, he added: "I am wrong. I will advise you no more on this subject. Only, let us defer the decision to the judgment of your noble and motherly protectress. I shall see her to-morrow; if she consents, I will tell you the names of your enemies. If not—not."

"And this woman, this second mother," said Djalma, "is her character such, that I can rely on her judgment?"

"She!" cried Rodin, clasping his hands, and speaking with increased excitement. Why, she is the most noble, the most generous, the most valiant being upon earth!—why, if you were really her son, and she loved you with all the strength of maternal affection, and a case arose in which you had to choose between an act of baseness and death,

she would say to you: 'Die!' though she might herself die with you."

"Oh, noble woman! so was my mother!" cried Djalma, with enthusiasm.

"Yes," resumed Rodin, with growing energy, as he approached the window concealed by the shade, towards which he threw an oblique and anxious glance, "if you would imagine your protectress, think only of courage, uprightness, and loyalty personified. Oh! she has the chivalrous frankness of the brave man, joined with the high-souled dignity of the woman, who not only never in her life told a falsehood, never concealed a single thought, but who would rather die than give way to the least of those sentiments of craft and dissimulation, which are almost forced upon ordinary women by the situation in which they are placed."

It is difficult to express the admiration which shone upon the countenance of Djalma, as he listened to this description. His eyes sparkled, his cheeks glowed, his heart palpitated with enthusiasm.

"That is well, noble heart!" said Rodin to him, drawing still nearer to the blind; "I love to see your soul sparkle through your eyes, on hearing me speak thus of your unknown protectress. Oh! but she is worthy of the pious adoration which noble hearts and great characters inspire!"

"Oh! I believe you," cried Djalma, with enthusiasm; "my heart is full of admiration and also of astonishment; for my mother is no more, and yet such a woman exists!"

"Yes, she exists. For the consolation of the afflicted, for the glory of her sex, she exists. For the honor of truth, and the shame of falsehood, she exists. No lie, no disguise, has ever tainted her loyalty, brilliant and heroic as the sword of a knight. It is but a few days ago that this noble woman spoke to me these admirable words, which, in all my life, I shall not forget: 'Sir,' she said, 'if ever I suspect any one that I love or esteem——'"

Rodin did not finish. The shade, so violently shaken that the spring broke, was drawn up abruptly, and, to the great astonishment of Djalma, Mdlle. de Cardoville appeared before him. Adrienne's cloak had fallen from her shoulders, and in the violence of the movement with which she had approached the blind, her bonnet, the strings of which were untied, had also fallen. Having left home suddenly, with only just time to throw a mantle over the picturesque and charming costume which she often chose to wear when alone, she appeared so radiant with beauty to Djalma's

dazzled eyes, in the centre of those leaves and flowers, that the Indian believed himself under the influence of a dream.

With clasped hands, eyes wide open, the body slightly bent forward, as if in the act of prayer, he stood petrified with admiration, Mdlle. de Cardoville, much agitated, and her countenance glowing with emotion, remained on the threshold of the greenhouse, without entering the room. All this had passed in less time than it takes to describe it. Hardly had the blind been raised, than Rodin, feigning surprise, exclaimed: "You here, madame?"

"Oh, sir!" said Adrienne, in an agitated voice, "I come to terminate the phrase which you have commenced. I told you, that when a suspicion crossed my mind, I uttered it aloud to the person by whom it was inspired. Well! I confess it: I have failed in this honesty. I came here as a spy upon you, when your answer to the Abbé d'Aigrigny was giving me a new pledge of your devotion and sincerity. I doubted your uprightness at the moment when you were bearing testimony to my frankness. For the first time in my life, I stooped to deceit; this weakness merits punishment, and I submit to it—demands reparation, and I make it—calls for apologies, and I tender them to you." Then, turning towards Djalma, she added: "Now, prince, I am no longer mistress of my secret. I am your relation, Mdlle. de Cardoville; and I hope you will accept from a sister the hospitality that you did not refuse from a mother."

Djalma made no reply. Plunged in ecstatic contemplation of this sudden apparition, which surpassed his wildest and most dazzling visions, he felt a sort of intoxication, which, paralyzing the power of thought, concentrated all his faculties in the one sense of sight; and just as we sometimes seek in vain to satisfy unquenchable thirst, the burning look of the Indian sought, as it were, with devouring avidity, to take in all the rare perfections of the young lady. Verily, never had two more divine types of beauty met face to face. Adrienne and Djalma were the very ideal of a handsome youth and maiden. There seemed to be something providential in the meeting of these two natures, so young and so vivacious, so generous and so full of passion, so heroic and so proud, who, before coming into contact, had, singularly enough, each learned the moral worth of the other; for if, at the words of Rodin, Djalma had felt arise in his heart an admiration, as lively as it was sudden, for the valiant and generous qualities of that unknown benefactress, whom he now discovered in Mdlle. de Cardoville, the

latter had, in her turn, been moved, affected, almost terrified, by the interview she had just overheard, in which Djalma had displayed the nobleness of his soul, the delicate goodness of his heart, and the terrible transports of his temper. Then she had not been able to repress a movement of astonishment, almost admiration, at sight of the surprising beauty of the prince; and soon after, a strange, painful sentiment, a sort of electric shock, seemed to penetrate all her being, as her eyes encountered Djalma's.

Cruelly agitated, and suffering deeply from this agitation, she tried to dissemble the impression she had received, by addressing Rodin, to apologize for having suspected him. But the obstinate silence of the Indian redoubled the lady's painful embarrassment. Again raising her eyes towards the prince, to invite him to respond to her fraternal offer, she met his ardent gaze wildly fixed upon her, and she looked once more with a mixture of fear, sadness, and wounded pride; then she congratulated herself on having foreseen the inexorable necessity of keeping Djalma at a distance from her, such apprehension did this ardent and impetuous nature already inspire. Wishing to put an end to her present painful situation, she said to Rodin, in a low and trembling voice, "Pray, sir, speak to the prince; repeat to him my offers. I cannot remain longer." So saying, Adrienne turned, as if to rejoin Florine. But, at the first step, Djalma sprang towards her with the bound of a tiger, about to be deprived of his prey. Terrified by the expression of wild excitement which inflamed the Indian's countenance, the young lady drew back with a loud scream.

At this, Djalma remembered himself, and all that had passed. Pale with regret and shame, trembling, dismayed, his eyes streaming with tears, and all his features marked with an expression of the most touching despair, he fell at Adrienne's feet, and lifting his clasped hands towards her, said in a soft, supplicating, timid voice: "Oh, remain! remain! do not leave me. I have waited for you so long!" To this prayer, uttered with the timid simplicity of a child, and a resignation which contrasted strangely with the savage violence that had so frightened Adrienne, she replied, as she made a sign to Florine to prepare for their departure: "Prince, it is impossible for me to remain longer here."

"But you will return?" said Djalma, striving to restrain his tears. "I shall see you again?"

"Oh, no! never—never!" said Mdlle. de Cardoville, in a failing voice. Then, profiting by the stupor into which her

answer had thrown Djalma, Adrienne disappeared rapidly behind the plants in the greenhouse.

Florine was hastening to rejoin her mistress, when, just at the moment she passed before Rodin, he said to her in a low, quick voice: "To-morrow we must finish with the hunchback." Florine trembled in every limb, and, without answering Rodin, disappeared, like her mistress, behind the plants. Broken, overpowered, Djalma remained upon his knees, with his head resting on his breast. His countenance expressed neither rage nor excitement, but a painful stupor; he wept silently. Seeing Rodin approach him, he rose, but with so tremulous a step, that he could hardly reach the divan, on which he sank down, hiding his face in his hands.

Then Rodin, advancing, said to him in a mild and insinuating tone: "Alas! I feared what has happened. I did not wish you to see your benefactress; and if I told you she was old, do you know why, dear prince?"

Djalma, without answering, let his hands fall upon his knees, and turned towards Rodin a countenance still bathed in tears.

"I knew that Mdlle. de Cardoville was charming, and at your age it is so easy to fall in love," continued Rodin; "I wished to spare you that misfortune, my dear prince, for your beautiful protectress passionately loves a handsome young man of this town."

Upon these words, Djalma suddenly pressed both hands to his heart, as if he felt a piercing stab, uttered a cry of savage grief, threw back his head, and fell fainting upon the divan.

Rodin looked at him coldly for some seconds, and then said as he went away, brushing his old hat with his elbow: "Come! it works—it works!"

CHAPTER XLV.

THE CONSULTATION.

It is night. It has just struck nine. It is the evening of that day on which Mdlle. de Cardoville first found herself in the presence of Djalma. Florine, pale, agitated, trembling, with a candle in her hand, had just entered a bedroom, plainly but comfortably furnished. This room was one of the apartments occupied by Mother Bunch, in Adrienne's house. They were situated on the ground-floor, and had two entrances. One opened on the garden, and the other on

the court-yard. From this side came the persons who applied to the workgirl for succor; an ante-chamber in which they waited, a parlor in which they were received, constituted Mother Bunch's apartments, along with the bedroom, which Florine had just entered, looking about her with an anxious and alarmed air, scarcely touching the carpet with the tips of her satin shoes, holding her breath, and listening at the least noise.

Placing the candle upon the chimney-piece, she took a rapid survey of the chamber, and approached the mahogany desk, surmounted by a well-filled bookcase. The key had been left in the drawers of this piece of furniture, and they were all three examined by Florine. They contained different petitions from persons in distress, and various notes in the girl's handwriting. This was not what Florine wanted. Three cardboard boxes were placed in pigeon-holes beneath the bookcase. These also were vainly explored, and Florine, with a gesture of vexation, looked and listened anxiously; then, seeing a chest of drawers, she made therein a fresh and useless search. Near the foot of the bed was a little door, leading to a dressing-room. Florine entered it, and looked—at first without success—into a large wardrobe, in which were suspended several black dresses, recently made for Mother Bunch, by order of Mdlle. de Cardoville. Perceiving, at the bottom of this wardrobe, half hidden beneath a cloak, a very shabby little trunk, Florine opened it hastily, and found there, carefully folded up, the poor old garments in which the work-girl had been clad when she first entered this opulent mansion.

Florine started—an involuntary emotion contracted her features; but considering that she had not liberty to indulge her feelings, but only to obey Rodin's implacable orders, she hastily closed both trunk and wardrobe, and leaving the dressing-room, returned into the bed-chamber. After having again examined the writing-stand, a sudden idea occurred to her. Not content with once more searching the cardboard boxes, she drew out one of them from the pigeon-hole, hoping to find what she sought behind the box: her first attempt failed, but the second was more successful. She found behind the middle box a copy-book of considerable thickness. She started in surprise, for she had expected something else; yet she took the manuscript, opened it, and rapidly turned over the leaves. After having perused several pages, she manifested her satisfaction, and seemed as if about to put the book in her pocket; but after a moment's

reflection, she replaced it where she had found it, arranged everything in order, took her candle, and quitted the apartment without being discovered—of which, indeed, she had felt pretty sure, knowing that Mother Bunch would be occupied with Mdlle. de Cardoville for some hours.

* * * * * * *

The day after Florine's researches, Mother Bunch, alone in her bed-chamber, was seated in an arm-chair, close to a good fire. A thick carpet covered the floor; through the window-curtains could be seen the lawn of a large garden; the deep silence was only interrupted by the regular ticking of a clock, and the crackling of the wood. Her hands resting on the arms of the chair, she gave way to a feeling of happiness, such as she had never so completely enjoyed since she took up her residence at the hotel. For her, accustomed so long to cruel privations, there was a kind of inexpressible charm in the calm silence of this retreat—in the cheerful aspect of the garden, and above all, in the consciousness that she was indebted for this comfortable position, to the resignation and energy she had displayed, in the thick of the many severe trials which now ended so happily. An old woman, with a mild and friendly countenance, who had been, by express desire of Adrienne, attached to the hunchback's service, entered the room and said to her: "Mademoiselle, a young man wishes to speak to you on pressing business. He gives his name as Agricola Baudoin."

At this name, Mother Bunch uttered an exclamation of surprise and joy, blushed slightly, rose and ran to the door which led to the parlor in which was Agricola.

"Good-morning, dear sister," said the smith, cordially embracing the young girl, whose cheeks burned crimson beneath those fraternal kisses.

"Ah, me!" cried the sempstress on a sudden, as she looked anxiously at Agricola; "what is that black band on your forehead? You have been wounded!"

"A mere nothing," said the smith, "really nothing. Do not think of it. I will tell you all about that presently. But first, I have things of importance to communicate."

"Come into my room, then; we shall be alone," said Mother Bunch, as she went before Agricola.

Notwithstanding the expression of uneasiness which was visible on the countenance of Agricola, he could not forbear smiling with pleasure as he entered the room and looked around him.

"Excellent, my poor sister! this is how I would always have you lodged. I recognize here the hand of Mdlle. de Cardoville. What a heart! what a noble mind!—Dost know, she wrote to me the day before yesterday, to thank me for what I had done for her, and sent me a gold pin (very plain), which she said I need not hesitate to accept, as it had no other value but that of having been worn by her mother! You can't tell how much I was affected by the delicacy of this gift!"

"Nothing must astonish you from a heart like hers," answered the hunchback. "But the wound—the wound?"

"Presently, my good sister; I have so many things to tell you. Let us begin by what is most pressing, for I want you to give me some good advice in a very serious case. You know how much confidence I have in your excellent heart and judgment. And then, I have to ask of you a service—oh! a great service," added the smith, in an earnest, and almost solemn tone, which astonished his hearer. "Let us begin with what is not personal to myself."

"Speak quickly."

"Since my mother went with Gabriel to the little country curacy he has obtained, and since my father lodges with Marshal Simon and the young ladies, I have resided, you know, with my mates, at M. Hardy's factory, in the common dwelling-house. Now, this morning—but first, I must tell you that M. Hardy, who has lately returned from a journey, is again absent for a few days on business. This morning, then, at the hour of breakfast, I remained at work a little after the last stroke of the bell; I was leaving the workshop to go to our eating-room, when I saw entering the court-yard, a lady who had just got out of a hackney-coach. I remarked that she was fair, though her veil was half down; she had a mild and pretty countenance, and her dress was that of a fashionable lady. Struck with her paleness, and her anxious, frightened air, I asked her if she wanted anything. 'Sir,' said she to me, in a trembling voice, and as if with a great effort, 'do you belong to this factory?'—'Yes, madame.'—'M. Hardy is then in danger?' she exclaimed.—'M. Hardy, madame? He has not yet returned home.'—'What!' she went on, 'M. Hardy did not come hither yesterday evening? Was he not dangerously wounded by some of the machinery?' As she said these words, the poor young lady's lips trembled, and I saw large tears standing in her eyes. 'Thank God, madame! all this is entirely false,' said I, 'for M. Hardy has not returned, and indeed is

only expected by to-morrow or the day after.'—'You are quite sure that he has not returned! quite sure that he is not hurt?' resumed the pretty young lady, drying her eyes.—'Quite sure, madame; if M. Hardy were in danger, I should not be so quiet in talking to you about him.'—'Oh! thank God! thank God!' cried the young lady. Then she expressed to me her gratitude, with so happy, so feeling an air, that I was quite touched by it. But suddenly, as if then only she felt ashamed of the step she had taken, she let down her veil, left me precipitately, went out of the court-yard, and got once more into the hackney-coach that had brought her. I said to myself: 'This is a lady who takes great interest in M. Hardy, and has been alarmed by a false report.'"

"She loves him, doubtless," said Mother Bunch, much moved, "and, in her anxiety, she perhaps committed an act of imprudence, in coming to inquire after him."

"It is only too true. I saw her get into the coach with interest, for her emotion had infected me. The coach started—and what did I see a few seconds after? A cab, which the young lady could not have perceived, for it had been hidden by an angle of the wall; and, as it turned round the corner, I distinguished perfectly a man seated by the driver's side, and making signs to him to take the same road as the hackney-coach."

"The poor young lady was followed," said Mother Bunch, anxiously.

"No doubt of it; so I instantly hastened after the coach, reached it, and through the blinds that were let down, I said to the young lady, whilst I kept running by the side of the coach door: 'Take care, madame; you are followed by a cab.'"

"Well, Agricola! and what did she answer?"

"I heard her exclaim, 'Great Heaven!' with an accent of despair. The coach continued its course. The cab soon came up with me; I saw, by the side of the driver, a great, fat, ruddy man, who, having watched me running after the coach, no doubt suspected something, for he looked at me somewhat uneasily."

"And when does M. Hardy return?" asked the hunchback.

"To-morrow, or the day after. Now, my good sister, advise me. It is evident that this young lady loves M. Hardy. She is probably married, for she looked so embarrassed when she spoke to me, and she uttered a cry of terror on learning that she was followed. What shall I do? I

wished to ask advice of Father Simon, but he is so very strict in such matters—and then a love affair, at his age! . . while you are so delicate and sensible, my good sister, that you will understand it all."

The girl started, and smiled bitterly; Agricola did not perceive it, and thus continued: "So I said to myself, 'There is only Mother Bunch, who can give me good advice.' Suppose M. Hardy returns to-morrow, shall I tell him what has passed or not?'"

"Wait a moment," cried the other, suddenly interrupting Agricola, and appearing to recollect something; "when I went to St. Mary's Convent, to ask for work of the superior, she proposed that I should be employed by the day, in a house in which I was to watch or, in other words, to act as a spy——"

"What a wretch!"

"And do you know," said the girl, "with whom I was to begin this odious trade? Why, with a Madame de—Fremont, or de Bremont, I do not remember which, a very religious woman, whose daughter, a young married lady. received visits a great deal too frequent (according to the superior) from a certain manufacturer."

"What do you say?" cried Agricola. "This manufacturer must be——"

"M. Hardy. I had too many reasons to remember that name, when it was pronounced by the superior. Since that day, so many other events have taken place, that I had almost forgotten the circumstance. But it is probable that this young lady is the one of whom I heard speak at the convent."

"And what interest had the superior of the convent to set a spy upon her?" asked the smith.

"I do not know; but it is clear that the same interest still exists, since the young lady was followed, and perhaps, at this hour, is discovered and dishonored. Oh! it is dreadful!" Then, seeing Agricola start suddenly, Mother Bunch added. "What, then, is the matter?"

"Yes—why not?" said the smith, speaking to himself; "why may not all this be the work of the same hand? The superior of a convent may have a private understanding with an abbé—but, then, for what end?"

"Explain yourself, Agricola," said the girl. "And then, —where did you get your wound? Tell me that, I conjure you."

"It is of my wound that I am just going to speak; for,

in truth, the more I think of it, the more this adventure of the young lady seems to connect itself with other facts."

"How so?"

"You must know that, for the last few days, singular things are passing in the neighborhood of our factory. First, as we are in Lent, an abbé from Paris (a tall, fine-looking man, they say) has come to preach in the little village of Villiers, which is only a quarter of a league from our works. The abbé has found occasion to slander and attack M. Hardy in his sermons."

"How is that?"

"M. Hardy has printed certain rules with regard to our work, and the rights and benefits he grants us. These rules are followed by various maxims as noble as they are simple, with precepts of brotherly love such as all the world can understand, extracted from different philosophies and different religions. But because M. Hardy has chosen what is best in all religions, the abbé concludes that M. Hardy has no religion at all, and he has therefore not only attacked him for this in the pulpit, but has denounced our factory as a centre of perdition and damnable corruption, because, on Sundays, instead of going to listen to his sermons, or to drink at a tavern, our comrades, with their wives and children, pass their time in cultivating their little gardens, in reading, singing in chorus, or dancing together in the common dwelling-house. The abbé has even gone so far as to say, that the neighborhood of such an assemblage of atheists, as he calls us, might draw down the anger of Heaven upon the country—that the hovering of Cholera was much talked of, and that very possibly, thanks to our impious presence, the plague might fall upon all our neighborhood."

"But to tell such things to ignorant people," exclaimed Mother Bunch, "is likely to excite them to fatal actions."

"That is just what the abbé wants."

"What do you tell me?"

"The people of the environs, still more excited, no doubt, by other agitators, show themselves hostile to the workmen of our factory. Their hatred, or at least their envy, has been turned to account. Seeing us live all together, well lodged, well warmed, and comfortably clad, active, gay, and laborious, their jealousy has been embittered by the sermons, and by the secret manœuvres of some depraved characters, who are known to be bad workmen, in the employment of M. Tripeaud, our opposition. All this excitement is beginning to bear fruit; there have

been already two or three fights between us and our neighbors. It was in one of these skirmishes that I received a blow with a stone on my head."

"Is it not serious, Agricola?—are you quite sure?" said Mother Bunch, anxiously.

"It is nothing at all, I tell you. But the enemies of M. Hardy have not confined themselves to preaching. They have brought into play something far more dangerous."

"What is that?"

"I, and nearly all my comrades, did our part in the three Revolutionary days of July; but we are not eager at present, for good reasons, to take up arms again. That is not everybody's opinion; well, we do not blame others, but we have our own ideas; and Father Simon, who is as brave as his son, and as good a patriot as any one, approves and directs us. Now, for some days past, we find all about the factory, in the garden, in the courts, printed papers to this effect: 'You are selfish cowards; because chance has given you a good master, you remain indifferent to the misfortunes of your brothers, and to the means of freeing them; material comforts have enervated your hearts.'"

"Dear me, Agricola! what frightful perseverance in wickedness!"

"Yes! and unfortunately these devices have their effect on some of our younger mates. As the appeal was, after all, to proud and generous sentiments, it has had some influence. Already, seeds of division have shown themselves in our workshops, where, before, all were united as brothers A secret agitation now reigns there. Cold suspicion takes the place, with some, of our accustomed cordiality Now, if I tell you that I am nearly sure these printed papers, thrown over the walls of our factory, to raise these little sparks of discord amongst us, have been scattered about by the emissaries of this same preaching abbé—would it not seem from all this, taken in conjunction with what happened this morning to the young lady, that M. Hardy has of late numerous enemies?"

"Like you, I think it very fearful, Agricola," said the girl; "and it is so serious, that M. Hardy alone can take a proper decision on the subject. As for what happened this morning to the young lady, it appears to me, that, immediately on M. Hardy's return, you should ask for an interview with him, and, however delicate such a communication may be, tell him all that passed."

"There is the difficulty. Shall I not seem as if wishing to pry into his secrets?"

"If the young lady had not been followed, I should have shared your scruples. But she was watched, and is evidently in danger. It is therefore, in my opinion, your duty to warn M. Hardy. Suppose (which is not improbable) that the lady is married; would it not be better, for a thousand reasons, that M. Hardy should know all?"

"You are right, my good sister; I will follow your advice. M. Hardy shall know everything. But now that we have spoken of others, I have to speak of myself—yes, of myself—for it concerns a matter on which may depend the happiness of my whole life," added the smith, in a tone of seriousness, which struck his hearer. "You know," proceeded Agricola, after a moment's silence, "that, from my childhood, I have never concealed anything from you—that I have told you everything—absolutely everything?"

"I know it, Agricola, I know it," said the hunchback, stretching out her white and slender hand to the smith, who grasped it cordially, and thus continued: "When I say everything, I am not quite exact—for I have always concealed from you my little love-affairs—because, though we may tell almost anything to a sister, there are subjects of which we ought not to speak to a good and virtuous girl, such as you are."

"I thank you, Agricola. I had remarked this reserve on your part," observed the other, casting down her eyes, and heroically repressing the grief she felt; "I thank you."

"But for the very reason, that I made it a duty never to speak to you of such love affairs, I said to myself, if ever it should happen that I have a serious passion—such a love as makes one think of marriage—oh! then, just as we tell our sister even before our father and mother, my good sister shall be the first to be informed of it."

"You are very kind, Agricola."

"Well then! the serious passion has come at last. I am over head and ears in love, and I think of marriage."

At these words of Agricola, poor Mother Bunch felt herself for an instant paralyzed. It seemed as if all her blood was suddenly frozen in her veins. For some seconds, she thought she was going to die. Her heart ceased to beat; she felt it, not breaking, but melting away to nothing. Then, the first blasting emotion over, like those martyrs who found, in the very excitement of pain, the terrible power to smile in the midst of tortures, the unfortunate girl found, in

the fear of betraying the secret of her fatal and ridiculous love, almost incredible energy. She raised her head, looked at the smith calmly, almost serenely, and said to him in a firm voice: "Ah! so, you truly love?"

"That is to say, my good sister, that, for the last four days, I scarcely live at all—or live only upon this passion."

"It is only since four days that you have been in love?"

"Not more—but time has nothing to do with it."

"And is *she* very pretty?"

"Dark hair—the figure of a nymph—fair as a lily—blue eyes, as large as that—and as mild, as good as your own."

"You flatter me, Agricola."

"No, no, it is Angela that I flatter—for that's her name. What a pretty one! Is it not, my good Mother Bunch?"

"A charming name," said the poor girl, contrasting bitterly that graceful appellation with her own nickname, which the thoughtless Agricola applied to her without thinking of it. Then she resumed, with fearful calmness: "Angela? yes, it is a charming name!"

"Well, then! imagine to yourself, that this name is not only suited to her face, but to her heart. In a word, I believe her heart to be almost equal to yours."

"She has my eyes—she has my heart," said Mother Bunch, smiling. "It is singular, how like we are."

Agricola did not perceive the irony of despair contained in these words. He resumed, with a tenderness as sincere as it was inexorable: "Do you think, my good girl, that I could ever have fallen seriously in love with any one, who had not in character, heart, and mind, much of you?"

"Come, brother," said the girl, smiling—yes, the unfortunate creature had the strength to smile; "come, brother, you are in a gallant vein to-day. Where did you make the acquaintance of this beautiful young person?"

"She is only the sister of one of my mates. Her mother is the head laundress in our common dwelling, and as she was in want of assistance, and we always take in preference the relations of members of the association, Mrs. Bertin (that's the mother's name) sent for her daughter from Lille, where she had been stopping with one of her aunts, and, for the last five days, she has been in the laundry. The first evening I saw her, I passed three hours, after work was over, in talking with her, and her mother and brother; and the next day, I felt that my heart was gone; the day after that, the feeling was only stronger—and now I am quite mad about her, and resolved on marriage—according as you shall

decide. Do not be surprised at this; everything depends upon you. I shall only ask my father and mother's leave, after I have yours."

"I do not understand you, Agricola."

"You know the utter confidence I have in the incredible instinct of your heart. Many times, you have said to me: 'Agricola, love this person, love that person, have confidence in that other"—and never yet were you deceived. Well! you must now render me the same service. You will ask permission of Mdlle. de Cardoville to absent yourself; I will take you to the factory: I have spoken of you to Mrs. Bertin and her daughter, as of a beloved sister; and, according to your impression at sight of Angela, I will declare myself or not. This may be childishness, or superstition, on my part; but I am so made."

"Be it so," answered Mother Bunch, with heroic courage; "I will see Mdlle. Angela; I will tell you what I think of her—and that, mind you, sincerely."

"I know it. When will you come?"

"I must ask Mdlle. de Cardoville what day she can spare me. I will let you know."

"Thanks, my good sister!" said Agricola warmly; then he added, with a smile: "Bring your best judgment with you—your full dress judgment."

"Do not make a jest of it, brother," said Mother Bunch, in a mild, sad voice; "it is a serious matter, for it concerns the happiness of your whole life."

At this moment, a modest knock was heard at the door. "Come in," said Mother Bunch. Florine appeared.

"My mistress begs that you will come to her, if you are not engaged," said Florine to Mother Bunch.

The latter rose, and, addressing the smith, said to him: "Please wait a moment, Agricola. I will ask Mdlle. de Cardoville what day I can dispose of, and I will come and tell you." So saying, the girl went out, leaving Agricola with Florine.

"I should have much wished to pay my respects to Mdlle. de Cardoville," said Agricola; "but I feared to intrude."

"My lady is not quite well, sir," said Florine, "and receives no one to-day. I am sure, that as soon as she is better, she will be quite pleased to see you."

Here Mother Bunch returned, and said to Agricola: "If you can come for me to-morrow, about three o'clock, so as not to lose the whole day, we will go to the factory, and you can bring me back in the evening."

"Then, at three o'clock to-morrow, my good sister."
"At three, to-morrow, Agricola."

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The evening of that same day, when all was quiet in the hotel, Mother Bunch, who had remained till ten o'clock with Mdlle. de Cardoville, re-entered her bedchamber, locked the door after her, and finding herself at length free and unrestrained, threw herself on her knees before a chair, and burst into tears. She wept long—very long. When her tears at length ceased to flow, she dried her eyes, approached the writing-desk, drew out one of the boxes from the pigeon-hole, and, taking from this hiding-place the manuscript which Florine had so rapidly glanced over the evening before, she wrote in it during a portion of the night.

CHAPTER XLVI.

MOTHER BUNCH'S DIARY.

We have said that the hunchback wrote during a portion of the night, in the book discovered the previous evening by Florine, who had not ventured to take it away, until she had informed the persons who employed her of its contents, and until she had received their final orders on the subject. Let us explain the existence of this manuscript, before opening it to the reader. The day on which Mother Bunch first became aware of her love for Agricola, the first word of this manuscript had been written. Endowed with an essentially trusting character, yet always feeling herself restrained by the dread of ridicule—a dread which, in its painful exaggeration, was the workgirl's only weakness—to whom could the unfortunate creature have confided the secret of that fatal passion, if not to paper—that mute confidant of timid and suffering souls, that patient friend, silent and cold, who, if it makes no reply to heart-rending complaints, at least always listens, and never forgets?

When her heart was overflowing with emotion, sometimes mild and sad, sometimes harsh and bitter, the poor work girl, finding a melancholy charm in these dumb and solitary outpourings of the soul, now clothed in the form of simple and touching poetry, and now in unaffected prose, had ac-

customed herself by degrees not to confine her confidences to what immediately related to Agricola, for though he might be mixed up with all her thoughts, other reflections, which the sight of beauty, of happy love, of maternity, of wealth, of misfortune, called up within her, were so impressed with the influence of her unfortunate personal position, that she would not even have dared to communicate them to him. Such, then, was this journal of a poor daughter of the people, weak, deformed, and miserable, but endowed with an angelic soul, and a fine intellect, improved by reading, meditation, and solitude; pages quite unknown, which yet contained many deep and striking views, both as regard men and things, taken from the peculiar standpoint in which fate had placed this unfortunate creature. The following lines, here and there abruptly interrupted or stained with tears, according to the current of her various emotions, on hearing of Agricola's deep love for Angela, formed the last pages of this journal:—

"Friday, March 3d, 1832.

"I spent the night without any painful dreams. This morning, I rose with no sorrowful presentiment. I was calm and tranquil when Agricola came. He did not appear to me agitated. He was simple and affectionate as he always is. He spoke to me of events relating to M. Hardy, and then, without transition, without hesitation, he said to me: 'The last four days I have been desperately in love. The sentiment is so serious, that I think of marriage. I have come to consult you about it.' That was how this overwhelming revelation was made to me—naturally and cordially—I on one side of the hearth, and Agricola on the other, as if we had talked of indifferent things. And yet no more is needed to break one's heart. Some one enters, embraces you like a brother, sits down, talks—and then——Oh, merciful heaven! my head wanders.

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"I feel calmer now. Courage, my poor heart, courage!—Should a day of misfortune again overwhelm me, I will read these lines written under the impression of the most cruel grief I can ever feel, and I will say to myself: 'What is the present woe compared to that past?' My grief is indeed cruel! it is illegitimate, ridiculous, shameful: I should not dare to confess it, even to the most indulgent of mothers. Alas! there are some fearful sorrows, which yet rightly make men shrug their shoulders in pity or contempt. Alas!

these are forbidden misfortunes. Agricola has asked me to go to-morrow, to see this young girl to whom he is so passionately attached, and whom he will marry, if the instinct of my heart should approve the marriage. This thought is the most painful of all those which have tortured me, since he so pitilessly announced this love. Pitilessly? No, Agricola—no, my brother—forgive me this unjust cry of pain! Is it that you know, can even suspect, that I love you better than you love, better than you can ever love, this charming creature?

"'Dark-haired—the figure of a nymph—fair as a lily—with blue eyes—as large as that—and almost as mild as your own."

"That is the portrait he drew of her. Poor Agricola! how would he have suffered, had he known that every one of his words was tearing my heart! Never did I so strongly feel the deep commiseration and tender pity, inspired by a good, affectionate being, who, in the sincerity of his ignorance, gives you your death-wound with a smile. We do not blame him—no—we pity him to the full extent of the grief that he would feel on learning the pain he had caused me. It is strange! but never did Agricola appear to me more handsome than this morning. His manly countenance was slightly agitated, as he spoke of the uneasiness of that pretty young lady. As I listened to him describing the agony of a woman who runs the risk of ruin for the man she loves, I felt my heart beat violently, my hands were burning, a soft languor floated over me—Ridiculous folly! As if I had any right to feel thus!

* * * * * * *

"I remember that, while he spoke, I cast a rapid glance at the glass. I felt proud that I was so well dressed; he had not even remarked it; but no matter—it seemed to me that my cap became me, that my hair shone finely, my gaze beamed mild—I found Agricola so handsome, that I almost began to think myself less ugly—no doubt, to excuse myself in my own eyes for daring to love him. After all, what happened to-day would have happened one day or another! Yes, that is consoling—like the thoughts that death is nothing, because it must come at last—to those who are in love with life! I have been always preserved from suicide—the last resource of the unfortunate, who prefer trusting in God to remaining amongst his creatures—by the sense of duty. One must not only think of self. And I reflected also—'God is good—always good—since the most wretched beings

find opportunities for love and devotion.' How is it that I, so weak and poor, have always found means to be helpful and useful to some one?

"This very day I felt tempted to make an end with life—Agricola and his mother had no longer need of me.—Yes, but the unfortunate creatures whom Mdlle. de Cardoville has commissioned me to watch over?—but my benefactress herself, though she has affectionately reproached me with the tenacity of my suspicions in regard to that man? I am more than ever alarmed for her—I feel that she is more than ever in danger—more than ever—I have faith in the value of my presence near her. Hence, I must live. Live—to go to-morrow to see this girl, whom Agricola passionately loves? Good heaven! why have I always known grief, and never hate? There must be a bitter pleasure in hating. So many people hate!—Perhaps I may hate this girl—Angela, as he called her, when he said, with so much simplicity: 'A charming name, is it not, Mother Bunch?' Compare this name, which recalls an idea so full of grace, with the ironical symbol of my witch's deformity! Poor Agricola! poor brother! goodness is sometimes as blind as malice, I see. Should I hate this young girl?—Why? Did she deprive me of the beauty which charms Agricola? Can I find fault with her for being beautiful? When I was not yet accustomed to the consequences of my ugliness, I asked myself, with bitter curiosity, why the Creator had endowed his creatures so unequally. The habit of pain has allowed me to reflect calmly, and I have finished by persuading myself, that to beauty and ugliness are attached the two most noble emotions of the soul—admiration and compassion. Those who are like me admire beautiful persons—such as Angela, such as Agricola—and these in their turn feel a touching pity for such as I am. Sometimes, in spite of one's self, one has very foolish hopes. Because Agricola, from a feeling of propriety, had never spoken to me of his love affairs, I sometimes persuaded myself that he had none—that he loved me, and that the fear of ridicule alone was with him, as with me, an obstacle in the way of confessing it. Yes, I have even made verses on that subject—and those, I think, not the worst I have written.

"Mine is a singular position! If I love, I am ridiculous; if any love me, he is still more ridiculous. How did I come so to forget that, as to have suffered and to suffer what I do?—But blessed be that suffering, since it has not engendered hate—no; for I will not hate this girl—I will perform

a sister's part to the last; I will follow the guidance of my heart; I have the instinct of preserving others—my heart will lead and enlighten me. My only fear is, that I shall burst into tears when I see her, and not be able to conquer my emotion. Oh, then! what a revelation to Agricola—a discovery of the mad love he has inspired!—Oh, never! the day in which he knew that would be the last of my life. There would then be within me something stronger than duty—the longing to escape from shame—that incurable shame, that burns me like a hot iron. No, no; I will be calm. Besides, did I not just now, when with him bear courageously a terrible trial? I will be calm. My personal feelings must not darken the second sight, so clear for those I love. Oh! painful, painful task! for the fear of yielding involuntarily to evil sentiments must not render me too indulgent toward this girl. I might compromise Agricola's happiness, since my decision is to guide his choice. Poor creature that I am. How I deceive myself! Agricola asks my advice, because he thinks that I shall have not the melancholy courage to oppose his passion; or else he would say to me: 'No matter—I love; and I brave the future!'

"But then, if my advice, if the instincts of my heart, are not to guide him if his resolution is taken beforehand—of what use will be to-morrow's painful mission? Of what use? To obey him. Did he not say—'Come!' In thinking of my devotion for him, how many times, in the secret depths of my heart, I have asked myself if the thought had ever occurred to him to love me otherwise than as a sister; if it had ever struck him, what a devoted wife he would have in me! And why should it have occurred to him? As long as he wished, as long as he may still wish, I have been, and I shall be, as devoted to him, as if I were his wife, sister, or mother. Why should he desire what he already possesses?

"Married to him—oh, God!—the dream is mad as ineffable. Are not such thoughts of celestial sweetness—which include all sentiments from sisterly to maternal love—forbidden to me, on pain of ridicule as distressing as if I wore dresses and ornaments, that my ugliness and deformity would render absurd? I wonder, if I were now plunged into the most cruel distress, whether I should suffer as much as I do, on hearing of Agricola's intended marriage? Would hunger, cold, or misery diminish this dreadful dolor?—or is it the dread pain that would make me forget hunger, cold, and misery?

"No, no; this irony is bitter. It is not well in me to speak thus. Why such deep grief? In what way have the affection, the esteem, the respect of Agricola, changed towards me? I complain—but how would it be, kind heaven! if, as, alas! too often happens, I were beautiful, loving, devoted, and he had chosen another, less beautiful, less loving, less devoted?—Should I not be a thousand times more unhappy? for then I might, I would have to blame him—whilst now I can find no fault with him, for never having thought of a union which was impossible, because ridiculous. And had he wished it, could I ever have had the selfishness to consent to it? I began to write the first pages of this diary as I began these last, with my heart steeped in bitterness—and as I went on, committing to paper what I could have intrusted to no one, my soul grew calm, till resignation came—Resignation, my chosen saint, who, smiling through her tears, suffers and loves, but hopes—never!"

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These words were the last in the journal. It was clear, from the blots of abundant tears, that the unfortunate creature had often paused to weep.

In truth, worn out by so many emotions, Mother Bunch, late in the night, had replaced the book behind the cardboard box, not that she thought it safer there than elsewhere (she had no suspicion of the slightest need for such precaution), but because it was more out of the way there than in any of the drawers, which she frequently opened in presence of other people. Determined to perform her courageous promise, and worthily accomplish her task to the end, she waited the next day for Agricola, and firm in her heroic resolution, went with the smith to M. Hardy's factory. Florine, informed of her departure, but detained a portion of the day in attendance on Mdlle. de Cardoville, preferred waiting for night to perform the new orders she had asked and received, since she had communicated by letter the contents of Mother Bunch's journal. Certain not to be surprised, she entered the workgirl's chamber, as soon as the night was come.

Knowing the place where she should find the manuscript, she went straight to the desk, took out the box, and then, drawing from her pocket a sealed letter, prepared to leave it in the place of the manuscript, which she was to carry away with her. So doing, she trembled so much, that she was obliged to support herself an instant by the table.

Every good sentiment was not extinct in Florine's heart; she obeyed passively the orders she received, but she felt painfully how horrible and infamous was her conduct. If only herself had been concerned, she would no doubt have had the courage to risk all, rather than submit to this odious despotism; but unfortunately, it was not so, and her ruin would have caused the mortal despair of another person whom she loved better than life itself. She resigned herself, therefore, not without cruel anguish, to abominable treachery.

Though she hardly ever knew for what end she acted, and this was particularly the case with regard to the abstraction of the journal, she foresaw vaguely, that the substitution of this sealed letter for the manuscript would have fatal consequences for Mother Bunch, for she remembered Rodin's declaration, that "it was time to finish with the young sempstress."

What did he mean by those words? How would the letter that she was charged to put in the place of the diary, contribute to bring about this result? she did not know—but she understood that the clear-sighted devotion of the hunchback justly alarmed the enemies of Mdlle. de Cardoville, and that she (Florine) herself daily risked having her perfidy detected by the young needlewoman. This last fear put an end to the hesitations of Florine; she placed the letter behind the box, and, hiding the manuscript under her apron, cautiously withdrew from the chamber.

CHAPTER XLVII.

THE DIARY CONTINUED.

Returned into her own room, some hours after she had concealed there the manuscript abstracted from Mother Bunch's apartment, Florine yielded to her curiosity, and determined to look through it. She soon felt a growing interest, an involuntary emotion, as she read more of these private thoughts of the young sempstress. Among many pieces of verse, which all breathed a passionate love for Agricola—a love so deep, simple, and sincere, that Florine was touched by it, and forgot the author's deformity—among many pieces of verse, we say, were divers other fragments, thoughts, and narratives, relating to a variety of

facts. We shall quote some of them, in order to explain the profound impression that their perusal made upon Florine.

Fragments from the Diary.

"This is my birthday. Until this evening, I had cherished a foolish hope. Yesterday, I went down to Mrs. Baudoin's, to dress a little wound she had on her leg. When I entered the room, Agricola was there. No doubt he was talking of me to his mother, for they stopped when I came in, and exchanged a meaning smile. In passing by the drawers, I saw a pasteboard box, with a pincushion-lid, and I felt myself blushing with joy, as I thought this little present was destined for me, but I pretended not to see it. While I was on my knees before his mother, Agricola went out. I remarked that he took the little box with him. Never has Mrs. Baudoin been more tender and motherly than she was that morning. It appeared to me that she went to bed earlier than usual. 'It is to send me away sooner,' said I to myself, 'that I may enjoy the surprise Agricola has prepared for me.' How my heart beat, as I ran fast, very fast, up to my closet! I stopped a moment before opening the door, that my happiness might last the longer. At last I entered the room, my eyes swimming with tears of joy. I looked upon my table, my chair, my bed—there was nothing. The little box was not to be found. My heart sank within me. Then I said to myself: 'It will be tomorrow—this is only the eve of my birthday.' The day is gone. Evening is come. Nothing. The pretty box was not for me. It had a pincushion-cover. It was only suited for a woman. To whom has Agricola given it?

"I suffer a good deal just now. It was a childish idea that I connected with Agricola's wishing me many happy returns of the day. I am ashamed to confess it; but it might have proved to me, that he has not forgotten I have another name besides that of Mother Bunch, which they always apply to me. My susceptibility on this head is unfortunately so stubborn, that I cannot help feeling a momentary pang of mingled shame and sorrow, every time that I am called by that fairy-tale name, and yet I have had no other from infancy. It is for that very reason that I should have been so happy if Agricola had taken this opportunity to call me for once by my own humble name—Magdalen. Happily, he will never know these wishes and regrets!"

Deeper and deeper touched by this page of simple grief, Florine turned over several leaves, and continued:

"I have just been to the funeral of poor little Victorine Herbin, our neighbor. Her father, a journeyman upholsterer, is gone to work by the month, far from Paris. She died at nineteen, without a relation near her. Her agony was not long. The good woman who attended her to the last, told us that she only pronounced these words: 'At last, oh, at last!' and that with an air of satisfaction, added the nurse. Dear child! she had become so pitiful. At fifteen, she was a rosebud—so pretty, so fresh-looking, with her light hair as soft as silk; but she wasted away by degrees—her trade of renovating mattresses killed her. She was slowly poisoned by the emanations from the wool.* They were all the worse, that she worked almost entirely for the poor, who have cheap stuff to lie upon.

"She had the courage of a lion, and an angel's resignation. She always said to me, in her low, faint voice, broken by a dry and frequent cough: "I have not long to live, breathing, as I do, lime and vitriol all day long. I spit blood, and have spasms that make me faint.'

"'Why not change your trade?' have I said to her.

"'Where will I find the time to make another apprenticeship?' she would answer; 'and it is now too late. I feel that I am *done for*. It is not *my fault*,' added the good creature, 'for I did not choose my employment. My father would have it so; luckily he can do without me. And then, you see, when one is dead, one cares for nothing, and has no fear of 'slop wages.'"

"Victorine uttered that sad, common phrase very sincerely, and with a sort of satisfaction. Therefore she died repeating: 'At last!'"

* In the *Ruche Populaire*, a working man's organ, are the following particulars:

"Carding Mattresses.—The dust which flies out of the wool makes carding destructive to health in any case, but trade adulterations enhance the danger. In sticking sheep, the skin gets blood-spotted; it has to be bleached to make it salable. Lime is the main whitener, and some of it clings to the wool after the process. The dresser (female, most often) breathes in the fine dust, and, by lung and other complaints, is far from seldom deplorably situated; the majority sicken of it and give up the trade, while those who keep to it, at the very least, suffer with a catarrh or asthma that torments them until death.

"As for horsehair, the very best is not pure. You can judge what the inferior quality is, from the workgirls calling it *vitriol hair*, because it is the refuse or clippings from goats and swine, washed in vitriol, boiled in dyes, etc., to burn and disguise such foreign bodies as straw, thorns, splinters, and even bits of skin, not worth picking out. The dust rising when a mass of this is beaten, makes as many ravages as the lime-wool."

"It is painful to think that the labor by which the poor man earns his daily bread, often becomes a long suicide! I said this the other day to Agricola: he answered me that there were many other fatal employments; those who prepare aquafortis, white lead, or minium, for instance, are sure to take incurable maladies of which they die.

"'Do you know,' added Agricola, 'what they say when they start for those fatal works?'—Why, 'We are going to the slaughter-house.'

"That made me tremble with its terrible truth.

"'And all this takes place in our day,' said I to him, with an aching heart; 'and it is well-known. And, out of so many of the rich and powerful, no one thinks of the mortality which decimates his brothers, thus forced to eat homicidal bread!'

"'What can you expect, my poor sister,' answered Agricola. 'When men are to be incorporated, that they may get killed in war, all pains are taken with them. But when they are to be organized, so as to live in peace, no one cares about it, except M. Hardy, my master. People say, 'Pooh! hunger, misery, and suffering of the laboring classes—what is that to us? that is not politics.' 'They are *wrong*,' added Agricola; 'IT IS MORE THAN POLITICS.'

"As Victorine had not left anything to pay for the church service, there was only the presentation of the body under the porch; for there is not even a plain mass for the poor. Besides, as they could not give eighteen francs to the curate, no priest accompanied the pauper's coffin to the common grave. If funerals, thus abridged and cut short, are sufficient in a religious point of view, why invent other and longer forms? Is it from cupidity?—If, on the other hand, they are not sufficient, why make the poor man the only victim of this insufficiency? But why trouble ourselves about the pomp, the incense, the chants, of which they are either too sparing or too liberal? Of what use? and for what purpose? They are vain, terrestrial things, for which the soul recks nothing, when, radiant, it ascends towards its Creator. Yesterday, Agricola made me read an article in a newspaper, in which violent blame and bitter irony are by turns employed, to attack what they call the baneful tendencies of some of the lower orders, to improve themselves, to write, to read the poets, and sometimes to make verses. Material enjoyments are forbidden us by poverty. Is it humane to reproach us for seeking the enjoyments of the mind? What harm can it do any one if every evening,

after a day's toil, remote from all pleasure, I amuse myself, unknown to all, in making a few verses, or in writing in this journal the good or bad impressions I have received? Is Agricola the worse workman, because, on returning home to his mother, he employs Sunday in composing some of those popular songs, which glorify the fruitful labors of the artisan, and say to all, *Hope and brotherhood!* Does he not make a more worthy use of his time than if he spent it in a tavern? Ah! those who blame us for these innocent and noble diversions, which relieve our painful toils and sufferings, deceive themselves when they think, that, in proportion as the intellect is raised and refined, it is more difficult to bear with privations and misery, and that so the irritation increases against the luckier few.

"Admitting even this to be the case—and it is not so—is it not better to have an intelligent, enlightened enemy, to whose heart and reason you may address yourself, than a stupid, ferocious, implacable foe? But no; enmities disappear as the mind becomes enlightened, and the horizon of compassion extends itself. We thus learn to understand moral afflictions. We discover that the rich also have to suffer intense pains, and that brotherhood in misfortune is already a link of sympathy. Alas! they also have to mourn bitterly for idolized children, beloved mistresses, reverend mothers; with them, also, especially amongst the women, there are, in the height of luxury and grandeur, many broken hearts, many suffering souls, many tears shed in secret. Let them not be alarmed. By becoming their equals in intelligence, the people will learn to pity the rich, if good and unhappy—and to pity them still more if rejoicing in wickedness.

"What happiness! what a joyful day! I am giddy with delight. Oh, truly, man is good, humane, charitable. Oh, yes! the Creator has implanted within him every generous instinct—and, unless he be a monstrous exception, he never does evil willingly. Here is what I saw just now. I will not wait for the evening to write it down, for my heart would, as it were, have time to cool. I had gone to carry home some work that was wanted in a hurry. I was passing the Place du Temple. A few steps from me I saw a child, about twelve years old at most, with bare head and feet, in spite of the severe weather, dressed in a shabby, ragged smock-frock and trousers, leading by the bridle a large cart-horse, with his harness still on. From time to time the horse stopped short, and refused to advance. The child, who had

no whip, tugged in vain at the bridle. The horse remained motionless. Then the poor little fellow cried out: 'O dear, O dear!' and began to weep bitterly, looking round him as if to implore the assistance of the passers-by. His dear little face was impressed with so heart piercing a sorrow, that, without reflecting, I made an attempt at which I can now only smile, I must have presented so grotesque a figure. I am horribly afraid of horses, and I am still more afraid of exposing myself to public gaze. Nevertheless, I took courage, and, having an umbrella in my hand, I approached the horse, and with the impetuosity of an ant that strives to move a large stone with a little piece of straw, I struck with all my strength on the croup of the rebellious animal. 'Oh, thanks, my good lady!' exclaimed the child, drying his eyes; "hit him again, if you please. Perhaps he will get up.'

"I began again, heroically; but, alas! either from obstinacy or laziness, the horse bent his knees, and stretched himself out upon the ground; then, getting entangled with his harness, he tore it, and broke his great wooden collar. I had drawn back quickly, for fear of receiving a kick. Upon this new disaster, the child could only throw himself on his knees in the middle of the street, clasping his hands and sobbing, and exclaiming in a voice of despair: 'Help! help!'

"The call was heard; several of the passers-by gathered round, and a more efficacious correction than mine was administered to the restive horse, who rose in a vile state, and without harness.

"'My master will beat me,' cried the poor child, as his tears redoubled; 'I am already two hours after time, for the horse would not go, and now he has broken his harness. My master will beat me, and turn me away. Oh dear! what will become of me! I have no father nor mother.'

"At these words, uttered with a heart-rending accent, a worthy old clothes-dealer of the Temple, who was amongst the spectators, exclaimed, with a kindly air: 'No father nor mother! Do not grieve so, my poor little fellow; the Temple can supply everything. We will mend the harness, and, if my gossips are like me, you shall not go away bareheaded or barefooted in such weather as this.'

"This proposition was greeted with acclamation; they led away both horse and child; some were occupied in mending the harness, then one supplied a cap, another a

pair of stockings, another some shoes, and another a good jacket; in a quarter of an hour the child was warmly clad, the harness repaired, and a tall lad of eighteen, brandishing a whip, which he cracked close to the horse's ears, by way of warning, said to the little boy, who, gazing first at his new clothes, and then at the good woman, believed himself the hero of a fairy-tale. 'Where does your governor live, little 'un?'

"'On the Quai du Canal-Saint-Martin, sir,' answered he, in a voice trembling with joy.

"'Very good,' said the young man, 'I will help you take home the horse, who will go well enough with me, and I will tell the master that the delay was no fault of your'n. A balky horse ought not to be trusted to a child of your age.'

"At the moment of setting out, the poor little fellow said timidly to the good dame, as he took off his cap to her: 'Will you let me kiss you, ma'am?'

"His eyes were full of tears of gratitude. There was heart in that child. This scene of popular charity gave me delightful emotions. As long as I could, I followed with my eyes the tall young man and the child, who now could hardly keep up with the pace of the horse, rendered suddenly docile by fear of the whip.

"Yes! I repeat it with pride; man is naturally good and helpful. Nothing could have been more spontaneous than this movement of pity and tenderness in the crowd, when the poor little fellow exclaimed: 'What will become of me? I have no father or mother!'

"'Unfortunate child!' said I to myself. 'No father nor mother. In the hands of a brutal master, who hardly covers him with a few rags, and ill-treats him into the bargain. Sleeping, no doubt in the corner of a stable. Poor little fellow! and yet so mild and good, in spite of misery and misfortune. I saw it—he was even more grateful than pleased at the service done him. But perhaps this good natural disposition, abandoned without support or counsel, or help, and exasperated by bad treatment, may become changed and embittered—and then will come the age of the passions—the bad temptations——'

"Oh! in the deserted poor, virtue is doubly saintly and respectable!

"This morning, after having (as usual) gently reproached me for not going to mass, Agricola's mother said to me these words, so touching in her simple and believing mouth, 'Luckily, I pray for you and myself too, my poor girl; the

good God will hear me, and you will *only* go, I hope, to Purgatory.'

"Good mother, angelic soul! she spoke those words in so grave and mild a tone, with so strong a faith in the happy result of her pious intercession, that I felt my eyes become moist, and I threw myself on her neck, as sincerely grateful as if I had believed in Purgatory. This day has been a lucky one for me. I hope I have found work, which luck I shall owe to a young person full of heart and goodness. She is to take me to-morrow to St. Mary's Convent, where she thinks she can find me employment."

Florine, already much moved by the reading, started at this passage in which Mother Bunch alluded to her, ere she continued as follows:

"Never shall I forget with what touching interest, what delicate benevolence, this handsome young girl received me, so poor, and so unfortunate. It does not astonish me, for she is attached to the person of Mdlle. de Cardoville. She must be worthy to reside with Agricola's benefactress. It will always be dear and pleasant to me to remember her name. It is graceful and pretty as her face: it is Florine. I am nothing, I have nothing—but if the fervent prayers of a grateful heart might be heard, Mdlle. Florine would be happy, very happy. Alas! I am reduced to say prayers for her—only prayers—for I can do nothing but remember and love her!"

These lines, expressing so simply the sincere gratitude of the hunchback, gave the last blow to Florine's hesitations. She could no longer resist the generous temptation she felt. As she read these last fragments of the journal, her affection and respect for Mother Bunch made new progress. More than ever she felt how infamous it was in her to expose to sarcasms and contempt the most secret thoughts of this unfortunate creature. Happily, good is often as contagious as evil. Electrified by all that was warm, noble, and magnanimous in the pages she had just read, Florine bathed her failing virtue in that pure and vivifying source, and, yielding, at last to one of those good impulses which sometimes carried her away, she left the room with the manuscript in her hand, determined, if Mother Bunch had not yet returned, to replace it—resolved to tell Rodin that, this second time, her search for the journal had been vain, the sempstress having no doubt discovered the first attempt.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

THE DISCOVERY.

A LITTLE while before Florine made up her mind to atone for her shameful breach of confidence, Mother Bunch had retured from the factory, after accomplishing to the end her painful task. After a long interview with Angela, struck, like Agricola, with the ingenuous grace, sense, and goodness, with which the young girl was endowed, Mother Bunch had the courageous frankness to advise the smith to enter into this marriage. The following scene took place whilst Florine, still occupied in reading the journal, had not yet taken the praiseworthy resolution of replacing it. It was ten o'clock at night. The workgirl, returned to Cardoville House, had just entered her chamber. Worn out by so many emotions, she had thrown herself into a chair. The deepest silence reigned in the house. It was now and then interrupted by the soughing of a high wind, which raged without and shook the trees in the garden. A single candle lighted the room, which was papered with dark green. That peculiar tint, and the hunchback's black dress, increased her apparent paleness. Seated in an arm-chair by the side of the fire, with her head resting upon her bosom, her hands crossed upon her knees, the work-girl's countenance was melancholy and resigned; on it was visible the austere satisfaction which is felt by the consciousness of a duty well performed.

Like all those who, brought up in the merciless school of misfortune, no longer exaggerate the sentiment of sorrow, too familiar and assiduous a guest to be treated as a stranger, Mother Bunch was incapable of long yielding to idle regrets and vain despair, with regard to what was already past. Beyond doubt, the blow had been sudden, dreadful; doubtless it must leave a long and painful remembrance in the sufferer's soul; but it was soon to pass, as it were, into that chronic state of pain-durance, which had become almost an integral part of her life. And then this noble creature, so indulgent to fate, found still some consolations in the intensity of her bitter pain. She had been deeply touched by the marks of affection shown her by Angela, Agricola's intended; and she had felt a species of

pride of the heart, in perceiving with what blind confidence, with what ineffable joy, the smith accepted the favorable presentiments which seemed to consecrate his happiness. Mother Bunch also said to herself: "At least, henceforth I shall not be agitated by hopes, or rather by suppositions as ridiculous as they were senseless. Agricola's marriage puts a term to all the miserable reveries of my poor head."

Finally, she found a real and deep consolation in the certainty that she had been able to go through this terrible trial, and conceal from Agricola the love she felt for him. We know how formidable to this unfortunate being were those ideas of ridicule and shame, which she believed would attach to the discovery of her mad passion. After having remained for some time absorbed in thought, Mother Bunch rose, and advanced slowly towards the desk.

"My only recompense," said she, as she prepared the materials for writing, "will be to entrust the mute witness of my pains with this new grief. I shall at least have kept the promise that I made to myself. Believing, from the bottom of my soul, that this girl is able to make Agricola happy, I told him so with the utmost sincerity. One day, a long time hence, when I shall read over these pages, I shall perhaps find in that a compensation for all that I now suffer."

So saying, she drew the box from the pigeon-hole. Not finding her manuscript, she uttered a cry of surprise; but, what was her alarm, when she perceived a letter to her address in the place of the journal! She became deadly pale; her knees trembled; she almost fainted away. But her increasing terror gave her a fictitious energy, and she had the strength to break the seal. A bank-note for five hundred francs fell from the letter on the table, and Mother Bunch read as follows:

"MADEMOISELLE,—There is something so original and amusing in reading in your memoirs the story of your love for Agricola, that it is impossible to resist the pleasure of acquainting him with the ex ent of it, of which he is doubtless ignorant, but to which he cannot fail to show himself sensible. Advantage will be taken to forward it to a multitude of other persons, who might, perhaps, otherwise be unfortunately deprived of the amusing contents of your diary. Should copies and extracts not be sufficient, we will have it printed, as one cannot too much diffuse such things. Some will weep—others will laugh—what appears superb to one set of people, will seem ridiculous to another; such is life—but your journal will surely make a great sensation. As you are capable of wishing to avoid your triumph, and as you were only covered with rags when you were received, out of charity into this house, where you wish to *figure* as the great lady, which does not suit your *shape* for

more reasons than one, we enclose in the present five hundred francs to pay for your day-book, and prevent your being without resources, in case you should be modest enough to shrink from the congratulations which await you, certain to overwhelm you by to-morrow, for, at this hour, your journal is already in circulation.

"One of your brethren,

"A REAL MOTHER BUNCH."

The vulgar, mocking, and insolent tone of this letter, which was purposely written in the character of a jealous lackey, dissatisfied with the admission of the unfortunate creature into the house, had been calculated with infernal skill, and was sure to produce the effect intended.

"Oh, good heaven!" were the only words the unfortunate girl could pronounce, in her stupor and alarm.

Now, if we remember in what passionate terms she had expressed her love for her adopted brother, if we recall many passages of this manuscript, in which she revealed the painful wounds often inflicted on her by Agricola without knowing it, and if we consider how great was her terror of ridicule, we shall understand her mad despair on reading this infamous letter. Mother Bunch did not think for a moment of all the noble words and touching narratives contained in her journal. The one horrible idea which weighed down the troubled spirit of the unfortunate creature, was, that on the morrow Agricola, Mdlle. de Cardoville, and an insolent and mocking crowd, would be informed of this ridiculous love, which would, she imagined, crush her with shame and confusion. This new blow was so stunning, that the recipient staggered a moment beneath the unexpected shock. For some minutes, she remained completely inert and helpless; then, upon reflection, she suddenly felt conscious of a terrible necessity.

This hospitable mansion, where she had found a sure refuge after so many misfortunes, must be left for ever. The trembling timidity and sensitive delicacy of the poor creature did not permit her to remain a minute more in this dwelling, where the most secret recesses of her soul had been laid open, profaned, and exposed no doubt to sarcasm and contempt. She did not think of demanding justice and revenge from Mdlle. de Cardoville. To cause a ferment of trouble and irritation in this house, at the moment of quitting it, would have appeared to her ingratitude towards her benefactress. She did not seek to discover the author or the motive of this odious robbery and insulting letter. Why should she, resolved, as she was, to fly from the humiliations with which she was threatened? She had a vague notion

(as indeed was intended), that this infamy might be the work of some of the servants, jealous of the affectionate deference shown her by Mdlle. de Cardoville—and this thought filled her with despair. Those pages—so painfully confidential, which she would not have ventured to impart to the most tender and indulgent mother, because, written as it were with her heart's blood, they painted with too cruel a fidelity the thousand secret wounds of her soul—those pages were to serve, perhaps served even now, for the jest and laughing-stock of the lackeys of the mansion.

* * * * * * *

The money which accompanied this letter, and the insulting way in which it was offered, rather tended to confirm her suspicions. It was intended that the fear of misery should not be the obstacle of her leaving the house. The workgirl's resolution was soon taken, with that calm and firm resignation which was familiar to her. She rose, with somewhat bright and haggard eyes, but without a tear in them. Since the day before, she had wept too much. With a trembling, icy hand, she wrote these words on a paper, which she left by the side of the bank-note: "May Mdlle. de Cardoville be blessed for all that she has done for me, and forgive me for having left her house, where I can remain no longer."

Having written this, Mother Bunch threw into the fire the infamous letter, which seemed to burn her hands. Then, taking a last look at her chamber, furnished so comfortably, she shuddered involuntarily as she thought of the misery that awaited her—a misery more frightful than that of which she had already been the victim, for Agricola's mother had departed with Gabriel, and the unfortunate girl could no longer, as formerly, be consoled in her distress by the almost maternal affection of Dagobert's wife. To live alone—quite alone—with the thought that her fatal passion for Agricola was laughed at by everybody perhaps even by himself—such were the future prospects of the hunchback. This future terrified her—a dark desire crossed her mind—she shuddered, and an expression of bitter joy contracted her features. Resolved to go, she made some steps towards the door, when, in passing before the fireplace, she saw her own image in the glass, pale as death, and clothed in black; then it struck her that she wore a dress which did not belong to her, and she remembered a passage in the letter, which alluded to the rags she had on before she entered that house.

"True!" said she, with a heart-breaking smile, as she looked at her black garments; "they would call me a thief."

And, taking her candle, she entered the little dressing-room, and put on again the poor, old clothes, which she had preserved as a sort of pious remembrance of her misfortunes. Only at this instant did her tears flow abundantly. She wept—not in sorrow at resuming the garb of misery, but in gratitude; for all the comforts around her, to which she was about to bid an eternal adieu, recalled to her mind at every step the delicacy and goodness of Mdlle. de Cardoville: therefore, yielding to an almost involuntary impulse, after she had put on her poor, old clothes, she fell on her knees in the middle of the room, and, addressing herself in thought to Mdlle. de Cardoville, she exclaimed, in a voice broken by convulsive sobs: "Adieu! oh, for ever, adieu!—You, that deigned to call me friend—and sister!"

Suddenly, she rose in alarm; she heard steps in the corridor, which led from the garden to one of the doors of her apartment, the other door opening into the parlor. It was Florine, who (alas! too late) was bringing back the manuscript. Alarmed at this noise of footsteps, and believing herself already the laughing-stock of the house, Mother Bunch rushed from the room, hastened across the parlor, gained the court-yard, and knocked at the window of the porter's lodge. The house-door opened, and immediately closed upon her. And so the workgirl left Cardoville House.

* * * * * * *

Adrienne was thus deprived of a devoted, faithful, and vigilant guardian. Rodin was delivered from an active and sagacious antagonist, whom he had always, with good reason, feared. Having, as we have seen, guessed Mother Bunch's love for Agricola, and knowing her to be a poet, the Jesuit supposed, logically enough, that she must have written secretly some verses inspired by this fatal and concealed passion. Hence the order given to Florine, to try and discover some written evidence of this love; hence this letter, so horribly effective in its coarse ribaldry, of which, it must be observed, Florine did not know the contents, having received it after communicating a summary of the contents of the manuscript, which, the first time, she had only glanced through without taking it away. We have said, that Florine, yielding too late to a generous repentance, had reached Mother Bunch's apartment, just as the latter quitted the house in consternation.

Perceiving a light in the dressing-room, the waiting-maid hastened thither. She saw upon a chair the black dress that Mother Bunch had just taken off, and, a few steps further, the shabby little trunk, open and empty, in which she had hitherto preserved her poor garments. Florine's heart sank within her; she ran to the secretary; the disorder of the card-board boxes, the note for five hundred francs left by the side of the two lines written to Mdlle. de Cardoville, all proved that her obedience to Rodin's orders had borne fatal fruit, and that Mother Bunch had quitted the house for ever. Finding the uselessness of her tardy resolution, Florine resigned herself with a sigh to the necessity of delivering the manuscript to Rodin. Then, forced by the fatality of her miserable position to console herself for evil by evil, she considered that the hunchback's departure would at least make her treachery less dangerous.

* * * * * * *

Two days after these events, Adrienne received the following note from Rodin, in answer to a letter she had written him, to inform him of the work-girl's inexplicable departure:—

"My Dear Young Lady,—Obliged to set out this morning for the factory of the excellent M. Hardy, whither I am called by an affair of importance, it is impossible for me to pay you my humble respects. You ask me what I think of the disappearance of this poor girl? I really do not know. The future will, I doubt not, explain all to her advantage. Only, remember what I told you at Dr. Baleinier's, with regard to a certain society and its secret emissaries, with whom it has the art of surrounding those it wishes to keep a watch on. I accuse no one; but let us only recall facts. This poor girl accused me; and I am, as you know, the most faithful of your servants. She possessed nothing; and yet five hundred francs were found in her secretary. You loaded her with favors; and she leaves your house without even explaining the cause of this extraordinary flight. I draw no conclusion, my dear young lady; I am always unwilling to condemn without evidence; but reflect upon all this, and be on your guard, for you have perhaps escaped a great danger. Be more circumspect and suspicious than ever; such at least is the respectful advice of your most obedient, humble servant, "Rodin."

CHAPTER XLIX.

THE TRYSTING-PLACE OF THE WOLVES.

It was a Sunday morning—the very day on which Mdlle. de Cardoville had received Rodin's letter with regard to Mother Bunch's disappearance. Two men were talking together, seated at a table in one of the public houses in the

little village of Villiers, situated at no great distance from Hardy's factory. The village was for the most part inhabited by quarrymen and stonecutters, employed in working the neighboring quarries. Nothing can be ruder and more laborious, and at the same time less adequately paid, than the work of this class of people. Therefore, as Agricola had told Mother Bunch, they drew painful comparisons between their condition, almost always miserable, and the comfort and comparative ease enjoyed by M. Hardy's workmen, thanks to his generous and intelligent management, and to the principles of association and community, which he had put in practice amongst them. Misery and ignorance are always the cause of great evils. Misery is easily excited to anger, and ignorance soon yields to perfidious counsels. For a long time, the happiness of M. Hardy's workmen had been naturally envied, but not with a jealousy amounting to hatred. As soon, however, as the secret enemies of the manufacturer, uniting with his rival Baron Tripeaud, had an interest in changing this peaceful state of things—it changed accordingly.

With diabolical skill and perseverance they succeeded in kindling the most evil passions. By means of chosen emissaries, they applied to those quarrymen and stonecutters of the neighborhood, whose bad conduct had aggravated their misery. Notorious for their turbulence, audacity, and energy, these men might exercise a dangerous influence on the majority of their companions, who were peaceful, laborious, and honest, but easily intimidated by violence. These turbulent leaders, previously embittered by misfortune, were soon impressed with an exaggerated idea of the happiness of M. Hardy's workmen, and excited to a jealous hatred of them. They went still further; the incendiary sermons of an abbé, a member of the Jesuits, who had come expressly from Paris to preach during Lent against M. Hardy, acted powerfully on the minds of the women, who filled the church, whilst their husbands were haunting the taverns. Profiting by the growing fear, which the approach of the Cholera then inspired, the preacher struck with terror these weak and credulous imaginations by pointing to M. Hardy's factory as a centre of corruption and damnation, capable of drawing down the vengeance of Heaven, and bringing the fatal scourge upon the country. Thus the men, already inflamed with envy, were still more excited by the incessant urgency of their wives, who, maddened by the abbé's sermons, poured their curses on that band of atheists, who

might bring down so many misfortunes upon them and their children. Some bad characters, belonging to the factory of Baron Tripeaud, and paid by him (for it was a great interest the honorable manufacturer had in the ruin of M. Hardy), came to augment the general irritation, and to complete it by raising one of those alarming union-questions, which in our day have unfortunately caused so much bloodshed. Many of M. Hardy's workmen, before they entered his employ, had belonged to a society or union, called the Devourers; while many of the stonecutters in the neighboring quarries belonged to a society called the Wolves. Now, for a long time, an implacable rivalry had existed between the Wolves and Devourers, and brought about many sanguinary struggles, which are the more to be deplored, as, in some respects, the idea of these unions is excellent, being founded on the fruitful and mighty principle of association. But unfortunately, instead of embracing all trades in one fraternal communion, these unions break up the working-class into distinct and hostile societies, whose rivalry often leads to bloody collisions.* For the last week, the Wolves, excited by so many different importunities, burned to discover an occasion or a pretext to come to blows with the Devourers; but the latter, not frequenting the public-houses, and hardly leaving the factory during the week, had hitherto rendered such a meeting impossible, and the Wolves had been forced to wait for the Sunday with ferocious impatience.

Moreover, a great number of the quarrymen and stonecutters, being peaceable and hard-working people, had refused, though Wolves themselves, to join this hostile manifestation against the Devourers of M. Hardy's factory; the leaders had been obliged to recruit their forces from the

* Let it be noted, to the working-man's credit, that such outrageous scenes become more and more rare as he is enlightened to the full consciousness of his worth. Such better tendencies are to be attributed to the just influence of an excellent tract on trades' union, written by M. Agricole Perdignier, and published in 1841, Paris. This author, a joiner, founded at his own expense an establishment in the Faubourg St. Antoine, where some forty or fifty of his trade lodged, and were given, after the day's work, a course of geometry, etc., applied to wood-carving. We went to one of the lectures, and found as much clearness in the professor as attention and intelligence in the audience. At ten, after reading selections, all the lodgers retire, forced by their scanty wages to sleep, perhaps, four in a room. M. Perdignier informed us that study and instruction were such powerful ameliorators, that, during six years, he had only one of his lodgers to expel. "In a few days," he remarked, "the bad eggs find out this is no place for them to addle sound ones!" We are happy to here render public homage to a learned and upright man, devoted to his fellow-workmen.

vagabonds and idlers of the barriers, whom the attraction of tumult and disorder had easily enlisted under the flag of the warlike Wolves. Such then was the dull fermentation, which agitated the little village of Villiers, whilst the two men of whom we have spoken were at table in the public-house.

These men had asked for a private room, that they might be alone. One of them was still young, and pretty well dressed. But the disorder in his clothes, his loose cravat, his shirt spotted with wine, his dishevelled hair, his look of fatigue, his marble complexion, his bloodshot eyes, announced that a night of debauch had preceded this morning; whilst his abrupt and heavy gesture, his hoarse voice, his look, sometimes brilliant, and sometimes stupid, proved that to the last fumes of the intoxication of the night before, were joined the first attacks of a new state of drunkenness. The companion of this man said to him, as he touched his glass with his own: "Your health, my boy!"

"Yours!" answered the young man; "though you look to me like the devil."

"I!—the devil?"

"Yes."

"Why?"

"How did you come to know me?"

"Do you repent that you ever knew me?"

"Who told you that I was a prisoner at Sainte-Pélagie?"

"Didn't I take you out of prison?"

"Why did you take me out?"

"Because I have a good heart."

"You are very fond of me, perhaps—just as the butcher likes the ox that he drives to the slaughter-house."

"Are you mad?"

"A man does not pay a hundred thousand francs for another without a motive."

"I have a motive."

"What is it? what do you want to do with me?"

"A jolly companion, that will spend his money like a man, and pass every night like the last. Good wine, good cheer, pretty girls, and gay songs. Is that such a bad trade?"

After he had remained a moment without answering, the young man replied with a gloomy air: "Why, on the eve of my leaving prison, did you attach this condition to my freedom, that I should write to my mistress to tell her that I would never see her again! Why did you exact this letter from me?"

"A sigh! what, are you still thinking of her?"

"Always."

"You are wrong. Your mistress is far from Paris by this time. I saw her get into the stage-coach, before I came to take you out of Sainte-Pélagie."

"Yes, I was stifled in that prison. To get out, I would have given my soul to the devil. You thought so, and therefore you came to me; only, instead of my soul, you took Cephyse from me. Poor Bacchanal-Queen! And why did you do it? Thousand thunders! Will you tell me?"

"A man as much attached to his mistress as you are is no longer a man. He wants energy, when the occasion requires."

"What occasion?"

"Let us drink!"

"You make me drink too much brandy."

"Bah! look at me!"

"That's what frightens me. It seems something devilish. A bottle of brandy does not even make you wink. You must have a stomach of iron and a head of marble."

"I have long travelled in Russia. There we drink to roast ourselves."

"And here to only warm. So—let's drink—but wine."

"Nonsense! wine is fit for children. Brandy for men like us!"

"Well, then, brandy; but it burns, and sets the head on fire, and then we see all the flames of hell!"

"That's how I like to see you, hang it!"

"But when you told me that I was too much attached to my mistress, and that I should want energy when the occasion required, of what occasion did you speak?"

"Let us drink!"

"Stop a moment, comrade. I am no more of a fool than others. Your half-words have taught me something."

"Well, what?"

"You know that I have been a workman, that I have many companions, and that, being a good fellow, I am much liked amongst them. You want me for a catspaw, to catch other chestnuts?"

"What then?"

"You must be some getter-up of riots—some speculator in revolts."

"What next?"

"You are travelling for some anonymous society, that trades in musket-shots."

"Are you a coward?"

"I burned powder in July, I can tell you—make no mistakes!"

"You would not mind burning some again?"

"Just as well that sort of fireworks as any other. Only I find revolutions more agreeable than useful; all that I got from the barricades of the three days was burnt breeches and a lost jacket. All the cause won by me, with its 'Forward! March!' says."

"You know many of Hardy's workmen?"

"Oh! that's why you have brought me down here?"

"Yes—you will meet with many of the workmen from the factory."

"Men from Hardy's take part in a row? No, no; they are too well off for that. You have been sold."

"You will see presently."

"I tell you they are well off. What have they to complain of?"

"What of their brethren—those who have not so good a master, and die of hunger and misery, and call on them for assistance? Do you think they will remain deaf to such a summons? Hardy is only an exception. Let the people but give a good pull all together, and the exception will become the rule, and all the world be happy."

"What you say there is true, but it would be a devil of a pull that would make an honest man out of my old master, Baron Tripeaud, who made me what I am—an out-and-out rip."

"Hardy's workmen are coming; you are their comrade, and have no interest in deceiving them. They will believe you. Join with me in persuading them——"

"To what?"

"To leave this factory, in which they grow effeminate and selfish, and forget their brothers."

"But if they leave the factory, how are they to live?"

"We will provide for that—on the great day."

"And what's to be done till then?"

"What you have done last night—drink, laugh, sing, and, by way of work, exercise themselves privately in the use of arms."

"Who will bring these workmen here?"

"Some one has already spoken to them. They have had printed papers, reproaching them with indifference to their brothers. Come, will you support me?"

"I'll support you—the more readily as I cannot very well

support myself. I only cared for Cephyse in the world; I know that I am on a bad road; you are pushing me on further; let the ball roll!—Whether we go to the devil one way or the other is not of much consequence. Let's drink."

"Drink to our next night's fun; the last was only apprenticeship."

"Of what then are you made? I looked at you, and never saw you either blush or smile, or change countenance. You are like a man of iron."

"I am not a lad of fifteen. It would take something more to make me laugh. I shall laugh to-night."

"I don't know if it's the brandy; but, devil take me, if you don't frighten me when you say you shall laugh to-night!"

So saying, the young man rose, staggering; he began to be once more intoxicated.

There was a knock at the door. "Come in!" The host made his appearance.

"What's the matter?"

"There's a young man below, who calls himself Olivier. He asks for M. Morok."

"That's right. Let him come up." The host went out.

"It is one of our men, but he is alone," said Morok, whose savage countenance expressed disappointment. "It astonishes me, for I expected a good number. Do you know him?"

"Olivier? Yes—a fair chap, I think."

"We shall see him directly. Here he is." A young man, with an open, bold, intelligent countenance, at this moment entered the room.

"What! old Sleepinbuff!" he exclaimed, at sight of Morok's companion.

"Myself. I have not seen you for an age, Olivier."

"Simple enough, my boy. We do not work at the same place."

"But you are alone!" cried Morok; and pointing to Sleepinbuff, he added: "You may speak before him—he is one of us. But why are you alone?"

"I come alone, but in the name of my comrades."

"Oh!" said Morok, with a sigh of satisfaction, "they consent."

"They refuse—just as I do!"

"What, the devil! they refuse? Have they no more courage than women?" cried Morok, grinding his teeth with rage.

"Hark ye," answered Olivier, coolly. "We have received

your letters, and seen your agent. We have had proof that he is really connected with great societies, many members of which are known to us."

"Well! why do you hesitate?"

"First of all, nothing proves that these societies are ready to make a movement."

"I tell you they are."

"He—tells you—they are," said Sleepinbuff, stammering; "and I (hic!) affirm it. Forward! March!"

"That's not enough," replied Olivier. "Besides, we have reflected upon it. For a week the factory was divided. Even yesterday the discussion was too warm to be pleasant. But this morning Father Simon called us to him; we explained ourselves fully before him, and he brought us all to one mind. We mean to wait, and if any disturbance breaks out, we shall see."

"Is that your final word?"

"It is our last word."

"Silence!" cried Sleepinbuff, suddenly, as he listened, balancing himself on his tottering legs. "It is like the noise of a crowd not far off." A dull sound was indeed audible, which became every moment more and more distinct, and at length grew formidable.

"What is that?" said Olivier, in surprise.

"Now," replied Morok, smiling with a sinister air, "I remember the host told me there was a great ferment in the village against the factory. If you and your other comrades had separated from Hardy's other workmen, as I hoped, these people who are beginning to howl would have been *for* you, instead of against you."

"This was a trap, then, to set one half of M. Hardy's workmen against the other!" cried Olivier; "you hoped that we should make common cause with these people against the factory, and that——"

The young man had not time to finish. A terrible outburst of shouts, howls, and hisses shook the tavern. At the same instant the door was abruptly opened, and the host, pale and trembling, hurried into the chamber, exclaiming: "Gentlemen! do any of you work at M. Hardy's factory?"

"I do," said Olivier.

"Then you are lost. Here are the Wolves in a body, saying there are Devourers here from M. Hardy's, and offering them battle—unless the Devourers will give up the factory, and range themselves on their side."

"It was a trap, there can be no doubt of it!" cried Olivier,

looking at Morok and Sleepinbuff, with a threatening air; "if my mates had come, we were all to be let in."

"I lay a trap, Olivier?" stammered Jacques Rennepont. "Never!"

"Battle to the Devourers! or let them join the Wolves!" cried the angry crowd with one voice, as they appeared to invade the house.

"Come!" exclaimed the host. Without giving Olivier time to answer, he seized him by the arm, and opening a window which led to a roof at no very great height from the ground, he said to him: "Make your escape by this window, let yourself slide down, and gain the fields; it is time."

As the young workman hesitated, the host added, with a look of terror:

"Alone, against a couple of hundred, what can you do? A minute more, and you are lost. Do you not hear them? They have entered the yard; they are coming up."

Indeed, at this moment, the groans, the hisses, and cheers redoubled in violence; the wooden staircase which led to the first story shook beneath the quick steps of many persons, and the shout arose, loud and piercing: "Battle to the Devourers!"

"Fly, Olivier!" cried Sleepinbuff, almost sobered by the danger.

Hardly had he pronounced the words when the door of the large room, which communicated with the small one in which they were, was burst open with a frightful crash.

"Here they are!" cried the host, clasping his hands in alarm. Then, running to Olivier, he pushed him, as it were, out of the window; for, with one foot on the sill, the workman still hesitated.

The window once closed, the publican returned towards Morok the instant the latter entered the large room, into which the leaders of the Wolves had just forced an entry, whilst their companions were vociferating in the yard and on the staircase. Eight or ten of these madmen, urged by others to take part in these scenes of disorder, had rushed first into the room, with countenances inflamed by wine and anger; most of them were armed with long sticks. A blaster, of Herculean strength and stature, with an old red handkerchief about his head, its ragged ends streaming over his shoulders, miserably dressed in a half-worn goat-skin, brandished an iron drilling-rod, and appeared to direct the movements. With bloodshot eyes, threatening and ferocious countenance, he advanced towards the small room, as

if to drive back Morok, and exclaimed, in a voice of thunder: "Where are the Devourers?—the Wolves will eat 'em up!"

The host hastened to open the door of the small room, saying: "There is no one here, my friends—no one. Look for yourselves."

"It is true," said the quarryman, surprised, after peeping into the room; "where are they, then? We were told there were a dozen of them here. They should have marched with us against the factory, or there'd 'a been a battle, and the Wolves would have tried their teeth!"

"If they have not come," said another, "they will come. Let's wait."

"Yes, yes; we will wait for them."

"We will look close at each other."

"If the Wolves want to see the Devourers," said Morok, "why not go and howl round the factory of the miscreant atheists? At the first howl of the Wolves they will come out, and give you battle."

"They will give you—battle," repeated Sleepinbuff, mechanically.

"Unless the Wolves are afraid of the Devourers," added Morok.

"Since you talk of fear, you shall go with us, and see who's afraid!" cried the formidable blaster, in a thundering voice, as he advanced towards Morok.

A number of voices joined in with, "Who says the Wolves are afraid of the Devourers?"

"It would be the first time!"

"Battle! battle! and make an end of it!"

"We are tired of all this. Why should we be so miserable, and they so well off?"

"They have said that quarrymen are brutes, only fit to turn wheels in a shaft, like dogs to turn spits," cried an emissary of Baron Tripeaud's.

"And that the Devourers would make themselves caps with wolf-skin," added another.

"Neither they nor their wives ever go to mass. They are pagans and dogs!" cried an emissary of the preaching abbé.

"The men might keep their Sunday as they pleased; but their wives not to go to mass!—it is abominable."

"And, therefore, the curate has said that their factory, because of its abominations, might bring down the cholera on the country."

"True! he said that in his sermon."

"Our wives heard it."

"Yes, yes; down with the Devourers, who want to bring the cholera on the country!"

"Hooray, for a fight!" cried the crowd in chorus.

"To the factory, my brave Wolves!" cried Morok, with the voice of a Stentor; "on to the factory!"

"Yes! to the factory! to the factory!" repeated the crowd, with furious stamping; for, little by little, all who could force their way into the room, or up the stairs, had there collected together.

These furious cries recalling Jacques for a moment to his senses, he whispered to Morok: "It is slaughter you would provoke? I wash my hands of it."

"We shall have time to let them know at the factory. We can give these fellows the slip on the road," answered Morok. Then he cried aloud, addressing the host, who was terrified at this disorder: "Brandy!—let us drink to the health of the brave Wolves! I will stand treat." He threw some money to the host, who disappeared, and soon returned with several bottles of brandy, and some glasses.

"What! glasses?" cried Morok. "Do jolly companions, like we are, drink out of glasses?" So saying, he forced out one of the corks, raised the neck of the bottle to his lips, and, having drunk a deep draught, passed it to the gigantic quarryman.

"That's the thing!" said the latter. "Here's in honor of the treat!—None but a sneak will refuse, for this stuff will sharpen the Wolves' teeth!"

"Here's to your health, mates!" said Morok, distributing the bottles.

"There will be blood at the end of all this," muttered Sleepinbuff, who, in spite of his intoxication, perceived all the danger of these fatal incitements. Indeed, a large portion of the crowd was already quitting the yard of the public-house, and advancing rapidly towards M. Hardy's factory.

Those of the workmen and inhabitants of the village, who had not chosen to take any part in this movement of hostility (they were the majority), did not make their appearance, as this threatening troop passed along the principal street; but a good number of women, excited to fanaticism by the sermons of the abbé, encouraged the warlike assemblage with their cries. At the head of the troop advanced the gigantic blaster, brandishing his formidable bar, followed by a motley mass, armed with sticks and stones,

Their heads still warmed by their recent libations of brandy, they had now attained a frightful state of frenzy. Their countenances were ferocious, inflamed, terrible. This unchaining of the worst passions seemed to forbode the most deplorable consequences. Holding each other arm-in-arm, and walking four or five together, the Wolves gave vent to their excitement in war-songs, which closed with the following verse:

"Forward! full of assurance!
Let us try our vigorous arms!
They have wearied out our prudence;
Let us show we've no alarms.
Sprung from a monarch glorious,*
To-day we'll not grow pale,
Whether we win the fight, or fail,
Whether we die, or are victorious!
Children of Solomon, mighty king,
All your efforts together bring,
Till in triumph we shall sing!"

* * * * * * *

Morok and Jacques had disappeared whilst the tumultuous troop were leaving the tavern to hasten to the factory.

CHAPTER L.

THE COMMON DWELLING-HOUSE.

WHILST the Wolves, as we have just seen, prepared a savage attack on the Devourers, the factory of M. Hardy had that morning a festal air, perfectly in accordance with the serenity of the sky; for the wind was from the north, and pretty sharp for a fine day in March. The clock had just struck nine in the Common Dwelling-house of the workmen, separated from the workshops by a broad path planted with trees. The rising sun bathed in light this imposing mass of buildings, situated a league from Paris, in a gay and salubrious locality, from which were visible the woody and picturesque hills, that on this side overlook the great city. Nothing could be plainer, and yet more cheerful than the aspect of the Common Dwelling-house of the workmen. Its slanting roof of red tiles projected over white

* The Wolves (among others) ascribe the institution of their company to King Solomon. See the curious work by M. Agricole Perdiguier, from which the war-song is extracted.

walls, divided here and there by broad rows of bricks, which contrasted agreeably with the green color of the blinds on the first and second stories.

These buildings, open to the south and east, were surrounded by a large garden of about ten acres, partly planted with trees, and partly laid out in fruit and kitchen-garden. Before continuing this description, which perhaps will appear a little like a fairy-tale, let us begin by saying, that the wonders, of which we are about to present the sketch, must not be considered Utopian dreams; nothing, on the contrary, could be of a more positive character, and we are able to assert, and even to prove (what in our time is of great weight and interest), that these wonders were the result of an excellent speculation, and represented an investment as lucrative as it was secure. To undertake a vast, noble, and most useful enterprise; to bestow on a considerable number of human creatures an ideal prosperity, compared with the frightful, almost homicidal doom, to which they are generally condemned; to instruct them, and elevate them in their own esteem; to make them prefer to the coarse pleasures of the tavern, or rather to the fatal oblivion which they find there, as an escape from the consciousness of their deplorable destiny, the pleasures of the intellect and the enjoyments of art; in a word, to make men moral by making them happy; and finally, thanks to this generous example, so easy of imitation, to take a place amongst the benefactors of humanity —and yet, at the same time, to do, as it were, without knowing it, an excellent stroke of business—may appear fabulous. And yet this was the secret of the wonders of which we speak.

* * * * * * *

Let us enter the interior of the factory. Ignorant of Mother Bunch's cruel disappearance, Agricola gave himself up to the most happy thoughts as he recalled Angela's image, and, having finished dressing with unusual care, went in search of his betrothed.

Let us say two words on the subject of the lodging, which the smith occupied in the Common Dwelling-house, at the incredibly low rate of seventy-five francs per annum, like the other bachelors on the establishment. This lodging, situated on the second story, was comprised of a capital chamber and bedroom, with a southern aspect, and looking on the garden; the pine floor was perfectly white and clean; the iron bedstead was supplied with a good mattress and

warm coverings; a gas-burner and a warm-air pipe were also introduced into the rooms, to furnish light and heat as required; the walls were hung with pretty fancy papering, and had curtains to match; a chest of drawers, a walnut table, a few chairs, a small library, comprised Agricola's furniture. Finally, in the large and light closet, was a place for his clothes, a dressing-table, and large zinc basin, with an ample supply of water. If we compare this agreeable, salubrious, comfortable lodging, with the dark, icy, dilapidated garret, for which the worthy fellow paid ninety francs at his mother's, and to get to which he had more than a league and a half to go every evening, we shall understand the sacrifice he made to his affection for that excellent woman.

Agricola, after casting a last glance of tolerable satisfaction at his looking-glass, while he combed his moustache and imperial, quitted his chamber, to go and join Angela in the women's workroom. The corridor, along which he had to pass, was broad, well-lighted from above, floored with pine, and extremely clean. Notwithstanding some seeds of discord which had been lately sown by M. Hardy's enemies amongst his workmen, until now so fraternally united, joyous songs were heard in almost all the apartments which skirted the corridor, and, as Agricola passed before several open doors, he exchanged a cordial good-morrow with many of his comrades. The smith hastily descended the stairs, crossed the court-yard, in which was a grass-plot planted with trees, with a fountain in the centre, and gained the other wing of the building. There was the workroom, in which a portion of the wives and daughters of the associated artisans, who happened not to be employed in the factory, occupied themselves in making up the linen. This labor, joined to the enormous saving effected by the purchase of the materials wholesale, reduced to an incredible extent the price of each article. After passing through this workroom, a vast apartment looking on the garden, well-aired in summer,* and well-warmed in winter, Agricola knocked at the door of the rooms occupied by Angela's mother.

If we say a few words with regard to this lodging, situated on the first story, with an eastern aspect, and also looking on the garden, it is that we may take it as a specimen of the habitation of a family in this association, supplied at the

* See Adolphe Bobierre "On Air and Health," Paris, 1844.

incredibly small price of one hundred and twenty-five francs per annum.

A small entrance, opening on the corridor, led to a large room, on each side of which was a smaller chamber, destined for the family, when the boys and girls were too big to continue to sleep in the two dormitories, arranged after the fashion of a large school, and reserved for the children of both sexes. Every night, the superintendence of these dormitories was entrusted to a father and mother of a family, belonging to the association. The lodging of which we speak, being, like all the others, disencumbered of the paraphernalia of a kitchen—for the cooking was done in common, and on a large scale, in another part of the building—was kept extremely clean. A pretty large piece of carpet, a comfortable arm-chair, some pretty-looking china on a stand of well-polished wood, some prints hung against the walls, a clock of gilt bronze, a bed, a chest of drawers, and a mahogany secretary, announced that the inhabitants of this apartment enjoyed not only the necessaries, but some of the luxuries of life. Angela, who, from this time, might be called Agricola's betrothed, justified in every point the flattering portrait which the smith had drawn of her in his interview with poor Mother Bunch. The charming girl, seventeen years of age at most, dressed with as much simplicity as neatness, was seated by the side of her mother. When Agricola entered, she blushed slightly at seeing him.

"Mademoiselle," said Agricola, "I have come to keep my promise, if your mother has no objection."

"Certainly, M. Agricola," answered the mother of the young girl, cordially. "She would not go over the Common Dwelling-house with her father, her brother, or me, because she wished to have that pleasure with you to-day. It is quite right that you, who can talk so well, should do the honors of the house to the new-comer. She has been waiting for you an hour, and with such impatience!"

"Pray excuse me, mademoiselle," said Agricola, gayly; "in thinking of the pleasure of seeing you, I forgot the hour. That is my only excuse."

"Oh, mother!" said the young girl, in a tone of mild reproach, and becoming red as a cherry, "why did you say that?"

"Is it true, yes or no? I do not blame you for it; on the contrary. Go with M. Agricola, child, and he will tell you, better than I can, what all the workmen of the factory owe to M. Hardy."

"M. Agricola," said Angela, tying the ribbons of her pretty cap, "what a pity that your good little adopted sister is not with us."

"Mother Bunch?—yes, you are right, mademoiselle; but that is only a pleasure put off, and the visit she paid us yesterday will not be the last."

Having embraced her mother, the girl took Agricola's arm, and they went out together.

"Dear me, M. Agricola!" said Angela; "if you knew how much I was surprised on entering this fine house, after being accustomed to see so much misery amongst the poor workmen in our country, and in which I too have had my share, whilst here everybody seems happy and contented. It is really like fairy-land; I think I am in a dream, and when I ask my mother the explanation of these wonders, she tells me, 'M. Agricola will explain it all to you.'"

"Do you know why I am so happy to undertake that delightful task, mademoiselle?" said Agricola, with an accent at once grave and tender. "Nothing could be more in season."

"Why so, M. Agricola?"

"Because, to show you this house, to make you acquainted with all the resources of our association, is to be able to say to you: 'Here, the workman, sure of the present, sure of the future, is not, like so many of his poor brothers, obliged to renounce the sweetest want of the heart—the desire of choosing a companion for life—in the fear of uniting misery to misery.'"

Angela cast down her eyes, and blushed.

"Here the workman may safely yield to the hope of knowing the sweet joys of a family, sure of not having his heart torn hereafter by the sight of the horrible privations of those who are dear to him; here, thanks to order and industry, and the wise employment of the strength of all, men, women, and children live happy and contented. In a word, to explain all this to you, mademoiselle," added Agricola, smiling with a still more tender air, "is to prove, that here we can do nothing more reasonable than love, nothing wiser than marry."

"M. Agricola," answered Angela, in a slightly agitated voice, and blushing still more as she spoke, "suppose we were to begin our walk."

"Directly, mademoiselle," replied the smith, pleased at the trouble he had excited in that ingenuous soul. "But, come; we are near the dormitory of the little girls. The chirping birds have long left their nests. Let us go there,"

"Willingly, M. Agricola."

The young smith and Angela soon entered a spacious dormitory, resembling that of a first-rate boarding school. The little iron bedsteads were arranged in symmetrical order; at each end were the beds of the two mothers of families, who took the superintendence by turns.

"Dear me! how well it is arranged, M. Agricola; and how neat and clean! Who is it that takes such good care of it?"

"The children themselves; we have no servants here. There is an extraordinary emulation between these urchins—as to who shall make her bed most neatly, and it amuses them quite as much as making a bed for their dolls. Little girls, you know, delight in playing at keeping house. Well, here they play at it in good earnest, and the house is admirably kept in consequence."

"Oh! I understand. They turn to account their natural taste for all such kinds of amusement."

"That is the whole secret. You will see them everywhere usefully occupied, and delighted at the importance of the employments given them."

"Oh, M. Agricola!" said Angela, timidly, "only compare these fine dormitories, so warm and healthy, with the horrible icy garrets, where children are heaped pell-mell on a wretched straw-mattress, shivering with cold, as is the case with almost all the workmen's families in our country!"

"And in Paris, mademoiselle, it is even worse."

"Oh! how kind, generous, and rich must M. Hardy be, to spend so much money in doing good!"

"I am going to astonish you, mademoiselle!" said Agricola, with a smile; "to astonish you so much, that perhaps you will not believe me."

"Why so, M. Agricola?"

"There is not certainly in the world a man with a better and more generous heart than M. Hardy; he does good for its own sake, and without thinking of his personal interest. And yet, Mdlle. Angela, were he the most selfish and avaricious of men, he would still find it greatly to his advantage to put us in a position to be as comfortable as we are."

"Is it possible, M. Agricola? You tell me so, and I believe it; but if good can so easily be done, if there is even an advantage in doing it, why is it not more commonly attempted?"

"Ah! mademoiselle, it requires three gifts very rarely met with in the same person—knowledge, power and will."

"Alas! yes. Those who have the knowledge, have not the power."

"And those who have the power, have neither the knowledge nor the will."

"But how does M. Hardy find any advantage in the good he does for you."

"I will explain that presently, mademoiselle."

"Oh! what a nice, sweet smell of fruit!" said Angela, suddenly.

"Our common fruit-store is close at hand. I wager we shall find there some of the little birds from the dormitory —not occupied in picking and stealing, but hard at work."

Opening a door, Agricola led Angela into a large room, furnished with shelves, on which the winter fruits were arranged in order. A number of children, from seven to eight years old, neatly and warmly clad, and glowing with health, exerted themselves cheerfully, under the superintendence of a woman, in separating and sorting the spoiled fruit.

"You see," said Agricola, "wherever it is possible, we make use of the children. These occupations are amusements for them, answering to the need of movement and activity natural to their age; and, in this way, we can employ the grown girls and the women to much better advantage."

"True, M. Agricola; how well it is all arranged."

"And if you saw what services the urchins in the kitchen render! Directed by one or two women, they do the work of eight or ten servants."

"In fact," said Angela, smiling, "at their age, we like so much to play at cooking dinner. They must be delighted."

"And, in the same way, under pretext of playing at gardening, they weed the ground, gather the fruit and vegetables, water the flowers, roll the paths, and so on. In a word, this army of infant-workers, who generally remain till ten or twelve years of age without being of any service, are here very useful. Except three hours of school, which is quite sufficient for them, from the age of six or seven their recreations are turned to good account, and the dear little creatures, by the saving of full-grown arms which they effect, actually gain more than they cost; and then, mademoiselle, do you not think there is something in the presence of childhood thus mixed up with every labor—something mild, pure, almost sacred, which has its influence

on our words and actions, and imposes a salutary reserve? The coarsest man will respect the presence of children."

"The more one reflects, the more one sees that everything here is really designed for the happiness of all!" said Angela, in admiration.

"It has not been done without trouble. It was necessary to conquer prejudices, and break through customs. But see, Mdlle. Angela! here we are at the kitchen," added the smith, smiling; "is it not as imposing as that of a barrack or a public school?"

Indeed, the culinary department of the Common Dwelling-house was immense. All its utensils were bright and clean; and thanks to the marvellous and economical inventions of modern science (which are always beyond the reach of the poorer classes, to whom they are most necessary, because they can only be practised on a large scale), not only the fire on the hearth, and in the stoves, was fed with half the quantity of fuel that would have been consumed by each family individually, but the excess of the caloric sufficed, with the aid of well-constructed tubes, to spread a mild and equal warmth through all parts of the house. And here also children, under the direction of two women, rendered numerous services. Nothing could be more comic than the serious manner in which they performed their culinary functions; it was the same with the assistance they gave in the bakehouse, where, at an extraordinary saving in the price (for they bought flour wholesale), they made an excellent household bread, composed of pure wheat and rye, so preferable to that whiter bread, which too often owes its apparent qualities to some deleterious substance.

"Good-day, Dame Bertrand," said Agricola, gayly, to a worthy matron, who was gravely contemplating the slow evolution of several spits, worthy of Gamache's Wedding, so heavily were they laden with pieces of beef, mutton, and veal, which began to assume a fine golden brown color of the most attractive kind; good-day, Dame Bertrand. According to the rule, I do not pass the threshold of the kitchen. I only wish it to be admired by this young lady, who is a new-comer amongst us."

"Admire, my lad, pray admire—and above all take notice, how good these brats are, and how well they work!" So saying, the matron pointed with the long ladle, which served her as a sceptre, to some fifteen children of both sexes, seated round a table, and deeply absorbed in the exer-

cise of their functions, which consisted in peeling potatoes and picking herbs.

"We are, I see, to have a downright Belshazzar's feast, Dame Bertrand?" said Agricola, laughing.

"Faith, a feast like we have always, my lad. Here is our bill of fare for to-day. A good vegetable soup, roast beef with potatoes, salad, fruit, cheese; and for extras, it being Sunday, some currant tarts made by Mother Denis at the bakehouse, where the oven is heating now."

"What you tell me, Dame Bertrand, gives me a furious appetite," said Agricola, gayly. "One soon knows when it is *your* turn in the kitchen," added he, with a flattering air.

"Get along, do!" said the female Soyer on service, merrily.

"What astonishes me, so much, M. Agricola," said Angela, as they continued their walk, "is the comparison of the insufficient, unwholesome food of the workmen in our country, with that which is provided here."

"And yet we do not spend more than twenty-five sous a day, for much better food than we should get for three francs in Paris."

"But really it is hard to believe, M. Agricola. How is it possible?"

"It is thanks to the magic wand of M. Hardy. I will explain it all presently."

"Oh! how impatient I am to see M. Hardy!"

"You will soon see him—perhaps to-day; for he is expected every moment. But here is the refectory, which you do not yet know, as your family, like many others, prefer dining at home. See what a fine room, looking out on the garden, just opposite the fountain!"

It was indeed a vast hall, built in the form of a gallery, with ten windows opening on the garden. Tables, covered with shining oil-cloth, were ranged along the walls, so that, in winter, this apartment served in the evening, after work, as a place of meeting for those who preferred to pass an hour together, instead of remaining alone or with their families. Then, in this large hall, well warmed and brilliantly lighted with gas, some read, some played cards, some talked, and some occupied themselves with easy work.

"That is not all," said Agricola to the young girl; "I am sure you will like this apartment still better when I tell you, that on Thursdays and Sundays we make a ball-room of it, and on Tuesdays and Saturdays a concert-room."

"Really!"

"Yes," continued the smith, proudly, "we have amongst us musicians, quite capable of tempting us to dance. Moreover, twice a week, nearly all of us sing in chorus—men, women, and children. Unfortunately, this week, some disputes that have arisen in the factory have prevented our concerts."

"So many voices! that must be superb."

"It is very fine, I assure you. M. Hardy has always encouraged this amusement amongst us, which has, he says—and he is right—so powerful an effect on the mind and the manners. One winter, he sent for two pupils of the celebrated Wilhelm, and, since then, our school has made great progress. I assure you, Mdlle. Angela, that, without flattering ourselves, there is something truly exciting in the sound of two hundred voices, singing in chorus some hymn to Labor or Freedom. You shall hear it, and you will, I think, acknowledge that there is something great and elevating in the heart of man, in this fraternal harmony of voices, blending in one grave, sonorous, imposing sound."

"Oh! I believe it. But what happiness to inhabit here. It is a life of joy; for labor, mixed with recreation, becomes itself a pleasure."

"Alas! here, as everywhere, there are tears and sorrows," replied Agricola, sadly. "Do you see that isolated building, in a very exposed situation?"

"Yes; what is it?"

"That is our hospital for the sick. Happily, thanks to our healthy mode of life, it is not often full; an annual subscription enables us to have a good doctor. Moreover, a mutual benefit society is arranged in such a manner amongst us, that any one of us, in case of illness, receives two-thirds of what he would have gained in health."

"How well it is all managed! And there, M. Agricola, on the other side of the grass-plot?"

"That is the wash-house, with water laid on, cold and hot; and under yonder shed is the drying-place: further on, you see the stables, and the lofts and granaries for the provender of the factory horses."

"But M. Agricola, will you tell me the secret of all these wonders?"

"In ten minutes you shall understand it all, mademoiselle."

Unfortunately, Angela's curiosity was for a while disappointed. The girl was now standing with Agricola close to

the iron gate, which shut in the garden from the broad avenue that separated the factory from the Common Dwelling-house. Suddenly, the wind brought from the distance the sound of trumpets and military music; then was heard the gallop of two horses, approaching rapidly, and soon after a general officer made his appearance, mounted on a fine black charger, with a long flowing tail and crimson housings; he wore cavalry boots and white breeches, after the fashion of the empire; his uniform glittered with gold embroidery, the red ribbon of the Legion of Honor was passed over his right epaulet, with its four silver stars, and his hat had a broad gold border, and was crowned with a white plume, the distinctive sign reserved for the marshals of France. No warrior could have had a more martial and chivalrous air, or have sat more proudly on his war-horse. At the moment Marshal Simon (for it was he) arrived opposite the place where Angela and Agricola were standing, he drew up his horse suddenly, sprang lightly to the ground, and threw the golden reins to a servant in livery, who followed also on horseback.

"Where shall I wait for your grace?" asked the groom.

"At the end of the avenue," said the marshal.

And, uncovering his head respectfully, he advanced hastily with his hat in his hand, to meet a person whom Angela and Agricola had not previously perceived. This person soon appeared at a turn of the avenue; he was an old man, with an energetic, intelligent countenance. He wore a very neat blouse, and a cloth cap over his long, white hair. With his hands in his pocket, he was quietly smoking an old meerschaum pipe.

"Good-morning, father," said the marshal, respectfully, as he affectionately embraced the old workman, who, having tenderly returned the pressure, said to him: "Put on your hat, my boy. But how gay we are!" added he, with a smile.

"I have just been to a review, father, close by; and I took the opportunity to call on you as soon as possible."

"But shall I then not see my granddaughters to-day, as I do every Sunday?"

"They are coming in a carriage, father, and Dagobert accompanies them."

"But what is the matter? you appear full of thought."

"Indeed, father," said the marshal, with a somewhat agitated air, "I have serious things to talk about."

"Come in, then," said the old man, with some anxiety.

The marshal and his father disappeared at the turn of the avenue.

Angela had been struck with amazement at seeing this brilliant General, who was entitled "your grace," salute an old workman in a blouse as his father; and, looking at Agricola with a confused air she said to him: "What, M. Agricola! this old workman——"

"Is the father of Marshal Duke de Ligny—the friend—yes, I may say the friend," added Agricola, with emotion, "of my father, who for twenty years served under him in war."

"To be placed so high, and yet to be so respectful and tender to his father!" said Angela. "The marshal must have a very noble heart; but why does he let his father remain a workman?"

"Because Father Simon will not quit his trade and the factory for anything in the world. He was born a workman, and he will die a workman, though he is the father of a duke and marshal of France."

CHAPTER LI.

THE SECRET.

When the very natural astonishment which the arrival of Marshal Simon had caused in Angela had passed away, Agricola said to her with a smile: "I do not wish to take advantage of this circumstance, Mdlle. Angela, to spare you the account of the secret, by which all the wonders of our Common Dwelling-house are brought to pass."

"Oh! I should not have let you forget your promise, M Agricola," answered Angela, "what you have already told me interests me too much for that."

"Listen, then. M. Hardy, like a true magician, has pronounced three cabalistic words: ASSOCIATION—COMMUNITY—FRATERNITY. We have understood the sense of these words, and the wonders you have seen have sprung from them, to our great advantage; and also, I repeat, to the great advantage of M. Hardy."

"It is that which appears so extraordinary, M. Agricola.

"Suppose, mademoiselle, that M. Hardy, instead of being what he is, had only been a cold-hearted speculator, looking merely to the profit, and saying to himself: "To make the

most of my factory, what is needed? Good work—great economy in the raw material—full employment of the workman's time; in a word, cheapness of manufacture, in order to produce cheaply—excellence of the thing produced, in order to sell dear.'"

"Truly, M. Agricola, no manufacturer could desire more."

"Well, mademoiselle, these conditions might have been fulfilled, as they have been, but how? Had M. Hardy only been a speculator, he might have said: 'At a distance from my factory, my workmen might have trouble to get there: rising earlier, they will sleep less; it is a bad economy to take from the sleep so necessary to those who toil. When they get feeble, the work suffers for it; then the inclemency of the seasons makes it worse; the workman arrives wet, trembling with cold, enervated before he begins to work—and then, what work!'"

"It is unfortunately but too true, M. Agricola. At Lille, when I reached the factory, wet through with a cold rain, I used sometimes to shiver all day long at my work."

"Therefore, Mdlle. Angela, the speculator might say: 'To lodge my workmen close to the door of my factory would obviate this inconvenience. Let us make the calculation. In Paris, the married workman pays about two hundred and fifty francs a-year,* for one or two wretched rooms and a closet, dark, small, unhealthy, in a narrow, miserable street; there he lives pell-mell with his family. What ruined constitutions are the consequence! and what sort of work can you expect from a feverish and diseased creature? As for the single men, they pay for a smaller, and quite as unwholesome lodging, about one hundred and fifty francs a-year. Now, let us make the addition. I employ one hundred and forty-six married workmen, who pay together, for their wretched holes, thirty-six thousand five hundred francs; I employ also one hundred and fifteen bachelors, who pay at the rate of seventeen thousand two hundred and eighty francs; the total will amount to about fifty thousand francs per annum, the interest on a million.'"

"Dear me, M. Agricola! what a sum to be produced by uniting all these little rents together!"

"You see, mademoiselle, that fifty thousand francs a-year is a millionaire's rent. Now, what says our speculator: To induce our workmen to leave Paris, I will offer them,

* The average price of a workman's lodging, composed of two small rooms and a closet at most, on the third or fourth story.

enormous advantages. I will reduce their rent one-half, and, instead of small, unwholesome rooms, they shall have large, airy apartments, well-warmed and lighted, at a trifling charge. Thus, one hundred and forty-six families, paying me only one hundred and twenty-five francs a-year, and one hundred and fifteen bachelors, seventy five francs, I shall have a total of twenty-six to twenty-seven thousand francs. Now, a building large enough to hold all these people would cost me at most five hundred thousand francs.* I shall then have invested my money at five per cent. at the least, and with perfect security, since the wages is a guarantee for the payment of the rent.'"

"Ah, M. Agricola! I begin to understand how it may sometimes be advantageous to do good, even in a pecuniary sense."

"And I am almost certain, mademoiselle, that, in the long run, affairs conducted with uprightness and honesty turn out well. But to return to our speculator. 'Here,' will he say, 'are my workmen, living close to my factory, well lodged, well warmed, and arriving always fresh at their work. That is not all; the English workman who eats good beef, and drinks good beer, does twice as much, in the same time, as the French workman,† reduced to a detestable kind of food, rather weakening than the reverse, thanks to the poisonous adulteration of the articles he consumes. My workmen will then labor much better, if they eat much better. How shall I manage it without loss? Now I think of it, what is the food in barracks, schools, even prisons? Is it not the union of individual resources which procures an amount of comfort impossible to realize without such an association? Now, if my two hundred and sixty workmen, instead of cooking two hundred and sixty detestable dinners, were to unite to prepare one good dinner for all of them,

* This calculation is amply sufficient, if not excessive. A similar building, at one league from Paris, on the side of Montrouge, with all the necessary offices, kitchen, wash-houses, etc., with gas and water laid on, apparatus for warming, etc., and a garden of ten acres, cost, at the period of this narrative, hardly five hundred thousand francs. An experienced builder has obliged us with an estimate, which confirms what we advance. It is, therefore, evident, that, even at the same price which workmen are in the habit of paying, it would be possible to provide them with perfectly healthy lodgings, and yet invest one's money at ten per cent.

† The fact was proved in the works connected with the Rouen Railway. Those French workmen who, having no families, were able to live like the English, did at least as much work as the latter, being strengthened by wholesome and sufficient nourishment.

which might be done, thanks to the savings of all sorts that would ensue, what an advantage for me and them! Two or three women, aided by children, would suffice to make ready the daily repasts; instead of buying wood and charcoal in fractions,* and so paying for it double its value, the association of my workmen would, upon my security (their wages would be a sufficient security for me in return), lay in their own stock of wood, flour, butter, oil, wine, etc., all which they would procure directly from the producers. Thus, they would pay three or four sous for a bottle of pure, wholesome wine, instead of paying twelve or fifteen sous for poison. Every week the association would buy a whole ox, and some sheep, and the women would make bread, as in the country. Finally, with these resources, and order, and economy, my workmen may have wholesome, agreeable, and sufficient food, for from twenty to twenty-five sous a day.'"

"Ah! this explains it, M. Agricola."

"It is not all, mademoiselle. Our cool-headed speculator would continue: 'Here are my workmen well lodged, well warmed, well fed, with a saving of at least half; why should they not also be warmly clad? Their health will then have every chance of being good, and health is labor. The association will buy wholesale, and at the manufacturing price (still upon my security, secured to me by their wages), warm, good, strong materials, which a portion of the workmen's wives will be able to make into clothes as well as any tailor. Finally, the consumption of caps and shoes being considerable, the association will obtain them at a great reduction in price.' Well, Mdlle. Angela! what do you say to our speculator?"

"I say, M. Agricola," answered the young girl, with ingenuous admiration, "that it is almost incredible, and yet so simple!"

"No doubt, nothing is more simple than the good and beautiful, and yet we think of it so seldom. Observe, that our man has only been speaking with a view to his own interest—only considering the material side of the question—reckoning for nothing the habit of fraternity and mutual aid, which inevitably springs from living together in common—not reflecting that a better mode of life improves and softens the character of man—not thinking of the support and instruction which the strong owe to the weak—not acknowledging, in fine, that the honest, active, and indus-

* Buying penny-worths, like all other purchases at minute retail, are greatly to the poor man's disadvantage.

trious man has a positive right to demand employment from society, and wages proportionate to the wants of his condition. No, our speculator only thinks of the gross profits; and yet, you see, he invests his money in buildings at five per cent., and finds the greatest advantages in the material comfort of his workmen."

"It is true, M. Agricola."

"And what will you say, mademoiselle, when I prove to you that our speculator finds also a great advantage in giving to his workmen, in addition to their regular wages, a proportionate share of his profits?"

"That appears to me more difficult to prove, M. Agricola."

"Yet I will convince you of it in a few minutes."

Thus conversing, Angela and Agricola had reached the garden-gate of the Common Dwelling-house. An elderly woman, dressed plainly, but with care and neatness, approached Agricola, and asked him: "Has M. Hardy returned to the factory, sir?"

"No, madame; but we expect him hourly."

"To-day, perhaps?"

"To-day or to-morrow, madame."

"You cannot tell me at what hour he will be here?"

"I do not think it is known, madame, but the porter of the factory, who also belongs to M. Hardy's private house, may, perhaps, be able to inform you."

"I thank you, sir."

"Quite welcome, madame."

"M. Agricola," said Angela, when the woman who had just questioned him was gone, "did you remark that this lady was very pale and agitated?"

"I noticed it as you did, mademoiselle: I thought I saw tears standing in her eyes."

"Yes, she seemed to have been crying. Poor woman! perhaps she came to ask assistance of M. Hardy. But what ails you, M. Agricola? You appear quite pensive."

Agricola had a vague presentiment that the visit of this elderly woman, with so sad a countenance, had some connection with the adventure of the young and pretty lady, who, three days before, had come all agitated and in tears to inquire after M. Hardy, and who had learned—perhaps too late—that she was watched and followed.

"Forgive me, mademoiselle," said Agricola to Angela; "but the presence of this old lady reminded me of a circumstance, which, unfortunately, I cannot tell you, for it is a secret that does not belong to me alone"

"Oh! do not trouble yourself, M. Agricola," answered the young girl, with a smile; "I am not inquisitive, and what we were talking of before interests me so much, that I do not wish to hear you speak of anything else."

"Well, then, mademoiselle, I will say a few words more, and you will be as well informed as I am of the secrets of our association."

"I am listening, M. Agricola."

"Let us still keep in view the speculator from mere interest. 'Here are my workmen,' says he, 'in the best possible condition to do a great deal of work. Now, what is to be done to obtain large profits? Produce cheaply, and sell dear. But there will be no cheapness, without economy in the use of the raw material, perfection of the manufacturing process, and celerity of labor. Now, in spite of all my vigilance, how am I to prevent my workmen from wasting the materials? How am I to induce them, each in his own province, to seek for the most simple and least irksome processes?'"

"True, M. Agricola; how is that to be done?"

"'And that is not all,' says our man; 'to sell my produce at high prices, it should be irreproachable, excellent. My workmen do pretty well; but that is not enough. I want them to produce masterpieces.'"

"But, M. Agricola, when they have once performed the task set them, what interest have workmen to give themselves a great deal of trouble to produce masterpieces?"

"There it is, Mdlle. Angela; WHAT INTEREST have they? Therefore, our speculator soon says to himself: 'That my workmen may have an *interest* to be economical in the use of the materials, an interest to employ their time well, an interest to invent new and better manufacturing processes, an interest to send out of their hands nothing but masterpieces—I must give them an interest in the profits earned by their economy, activity, zeal, and skill. The better they manufacture, the better I shall sell, and the larger will be their gain, and mine also.'"

"Oh! now I understand, M. Agricola."

"And our speculator would make a good speculation. Before he was interested, the workman said: 'What does it matter to me, that I do more or better in the course of the day? What shall I gain by it? Nothing. Well, then, little work for little wages. But now, on the contrary (he says), I have an interest in displaying zeal and economy. All is changed. I redouble my activity, and strive to excel the others. If a comrade is lazy, and likely to do harm to

the factory, I have the right to say to him: 'Mate, we all suffer more or less from your laziness, and from the injury you are doing the common weal.'"

"And then, M. Agricola, with what ardor, courage, and hope, you must set to work!"

"That is what our speculator counts on; and he may say to himself, further: 'Treasures of experience and practical wisdom are often buried in workshops, for want of good-will, opportunity, or encouragement. Excellent workmen, instead of making all the improvements in their power, follow with indifference the old jog-trot. What a pity! for an intelligent man, occupied all his life with some special employment, must discover, in the long run, a thousand ways of doing his work better and quicker. I will form, therefore, a sort of consulting committee; I will summon to it my foremen and my most skillful workmen. Our interest is now the same. Light will necessarily spring from this centre of practical intelligence.' Now, the speculator is not deceived in this, and soon struck with the incredible resources, the thousand new, ingenious, perfect inventions suddenly revealed by his workmen, 'Why,' he exclaims, 'if you knew this, did you not tell it before? What for the last ten years has cost me a hundred francs to make, would have cost me only fifty, without reckoning an enormous saving of time.'—'Sir,' answers the workman, who is not more stupid than others, "what interest had I, that you should effect a saving of fifty per cent.? None. But now it is different. You give me, besides my wages, a share in your profits; you raise me in my own esteem, by consulting my experience and knowledge. Instead of treating me as an inferior being, you enter into communion with me. It is my interest, it is my duty, to tell you all I know, and to try to acquire more.' And thus it is, Mdlle. Angela, that the speculator can organize his establishment, so as to shame his oppositionists, and provoke their envy. Now if, instead of a cold-hearted calculator, we take a man who unites with the knowledge of these facts the tender and generous sympathies of an evangelical heart, and the elevation of a superior mind, he will extend his ardent solicitude, not only to the material comfort, but to the moral emancipation, of his workmen. Seeking everywhere every possible means to develop their intelligence, to improve their hearts, and strong in the authority acquired by his beneficence, feeling that he on whom depends the happiness or the misery of three hundred human creatures has also the care of souls, he will

be the guide of those whom he no longer calls his workmen, but his brothers, in a straightforward and noble path, and will try to create in them the taste for knowledge and art, which will render them happy and proud of a condition of life that is often accepted by others with tears and curses of despair. Well, Mdlle. Angela, such a man is—but, see! he could not arrive amongst us except in the middle of a blessing. There he is—there is M. Hardy!"

"Oh, M. Agricola!" said Angela, deeply moved, and drying her tears; "we should receive him with our hands clasped in gratitude."

"Look if that mild and noble countenance is not the image of his admirable soul!"

A carriage with post horses, in which was M. Hardy, with M. de Blessac, the unworthy friend who was betraying him in so infamous a manner, entered at this moment the courtyard of the factory.

A little while after, a humble hackney-coach was seen advancing also towards the factory, from the direction of Paris. In this coach was Rodin.

CHAPTER LII.

REVELATIONS.

During the visit of Angela and Agricola to the Common Dwelling-house, the band of Wolves, joined upon the road by many of the haunters of taverns, continued to march towards the factory, which the hackney-coach, that brought Rodin from Paris, was also fast approaching. M. Hardy, on getting out of the carriage with his friend, M. de Blessac, had entered the parlor of the house that he occupied near the factory. M. Hardy was of middle size, with an elegant and slight figure, which announced a nature essentially nervous and impressionable. His forehead was broad and open, his complexion pale, his eyes black, full at once of mildness and penetration, his countenance honest, intelligent, and attractive.

One word will paint the character of M. Hardy. His mother had called him her Sensitive Plant. His was indeed one of those fine and exquisitely delicate organizations, which are trusting, loving, noble, generous, but so susceptible, that the least touch makes them shrink into themselves.

If we join to this excessive sensibility a passionate love for art, a first-rate intellect, tastes essentially refined, and then think of the thousand deceptions, and numberless infamies of which M. Hardy must have been the victim in his career as a manufacturer, we shall wonder how this heart, so delicate and tender, had not been broken a thousand times, in its incessant struggle with merciless self-interest. M. Hardy had indeed suffered much. Forced to follow the career of productive industry, to honor the engagements of his father, a model of uprightness and probity, who had yet left his affairs somewhat embarrassed, in consequence of the events of 1815, he had succeeded, by perseverance and capacity, in attaining one of the most honorable positions in the commercial world. But, to arrive at this point, what ignoble annoyances had he to bear with, what perfidious opposition to combat, what hateful rivalries to tire out!

Sensitive as he was, M. Hardy would a thousand times have fallen a victim to his emotions of painful indignation against baseness, of bitter disgust at dishonesty, but for the wise and firm support of his mother. When he returned to her, after a day of painful struggles with odious deceptions, he found himself suddenly transported into an atmosphere of such beneficent purity, of such radiant serenity, that he lost almost on the instant the remembrance of the base things by which he had been so cruelly tortured during the day; the pangs of his heart were appeased at the mere contact of her great and lofty soul; and therefore his love for her resembled idolatry. When he lost her, he experienced one of those calm, deep sorrows which have no end—which become, as it were, part of life, and have even sometimes their days of melancholy sweetness. A little while after this great misfortune, M. Hardy became more closely connected with his workmen. He had always been a just and good master; but, although the place that his mother left in his heart would ever remain void, he felt as it were a redoubled overflowing of the affections, and the more he suffered, the more he craved to see happy faces around him. The wonderful ameliorations, which he now produced in the physical and moral condition of all about him, served, not to divert, but to occupy his grief. Little by little, he withdrew from the world, and concentrated his life in three affections: a tender and devoted friendship, which seemed to include all past friendships—a love ardent and sincere, like a last passion—and a paternal attachment to his workmen. His days therefore passed in the heart of that little

world, so full of respect and gratitude towards him—a world, which he had, as it were, created after the image of his mind, that he might find there a refuge from the painful realities he dreaded, surrounded with good, intelligent, happy beings, capable of responding to the noble thoughts which had become more and more necessary to his existence. Thus, after many sorrows, M. Hardy, arrived at the maturity of age, possessing a sincere friend, a mistress worthy of his love, and knowing himself certain of the passionate devotion of his workmen, had attained, at the period of this history, all the happiness he could hope for since his mother's death.

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M. de Blessac, his bosom friend, had long been worthy of his touching and fraternal affection; but we have seen by what diabolical means Father d'Aigrigny and Rodin had succeeded in making M. de Blessac, until then upright and sincere, the instrument of their machinations. The two friends, who had felt on their journey a little of the sharp influence of the north wind, were warming themselves at a good fire lighted in M. Hardy's parlor.

"Oh! my dear Marcel, I begin really to get old," said M. Hardy, with a smile, addressing M. de Blessac; "I feel more and more the want of being at home. To depart from my usual habits has become painful to me, and I execrate whatever obliges me to leave this happy little spot of ground."

"And when I think," answered M. de Blessac, unable to forbear blushing, "when I think, my friend, that you undertook this long journey only for my sake!——"

"Well, my dear Marcel! have you not just accompanied me in your turn, in an excursion which, without you, would have been as tiresome as it has been charming?"

"What a difference, my friend! I have contracted towards you a debt that I can never repay."

"Nonsense, my dear Marcel! Between us, there are no distinctions of meum and tuum. Besides, in matters of friendship, it is as sweet to give as to receive."

"Noble heart! noble heart!"

"Say, happy heart!—most happy, in the last affections for which it beats."

"And who, gracious heaven! could deserve happiness on earth, if it be not you, my friend?"

"And to what do I owe that happiness? To the affections which I found here, ready to sustain me, when de-

prived of the support of my mother, who was all my strength, I felt myself (I confess my weakness) almost incapable of standing up against adversity."

"You, my friend—with so firm and resolute a character in doing good—you, that I have seen struggle with so much energy and courage, to secure the triumph of some great and noble idea?"

"Yes; but the farther I advance in my career, the more am I disgusted with all base and shameful actions, and the less strength I feel to encounter them."

"Were it necessary, you would have the courage, my friend."

"My dear Marcel," replied M. Hardy, with mild and restrained emotion, "I have often said to you: My courage was my mother. You see, my friend, when I went to her, with my heart torn by some horrible ingratitude, or disgusted by some base deceit, she, taking my hands between her own venerable palms, would say to me in her grave and tender voice: 'My dear child, it is for the ungrateful and dishonest to suffer; let us pity the wicked, let us forget evil, and only think of good.'—Then, my friend, this heart, painfully contracted, expanded beneath the sacred influence of the maternal words, and every day I gathered strength from her, to recommence on the morrow a cruel struggle with the sad necessities of my condition. Happily, it has pleased God, that, after losing that beloved mother, I have been able to bind up my life with affections, deprived of which, I confess, I should find myself feeble and disarmed—for you cannot tell, Marcel, the support, the strength that I have found in your friendship."

"Do not speak of me, my dear friend," replied M. de Blessac, dissembling his embarrassment. "Let us talk of another affection, almost as sweet and tender as that of a mother."

"I understand you, my good Marcel," replied M. Hardy: "I have concealed nothing from you, since, under such serious circumstances, I had recourse to the counsels of your friendship. Well! yes; I think that every day I live augments my adoration for this woman, the only one that I have ever passionately loved, the only one that I shall now ever love. And then I must tell you, that my mother, not knowing what Margaret was to me, was often loud in her praise, and that circumstance renders this love almost sacred in my eyes."

"And then there are such strange resemblances between

Mme. de Noisy's character and yours, my friend; above all, in her worship of her mother."

"It is true, Marcel; that affection has often caused me both admiration and torment. How often she has said to me, with her habitual frankness: 'I have sacrificed all for you, but I would sacrifice you for my mother.'"

"Thank heaven, my friend, you will never see Mme. de Noisy exposed to that cruel choice. Her mother, you say, has long renounced her intention of returning to America, where M. de Noisy, perfectly careless of his wife, appears to have settled himself permanently. Thanks to the discreet devotion of the excellent woman by whom Margaret was brought up, your love is concealed in the deepest mystery. What could disturb it now?"

"Nothing—oh! nothing," cried M. Hardy. "I have almost security for its duration."

"What do you mean, my friend?"

"I do not know if I ought to tell you."

"Have you ever found me indiscreet, my friend?"

"You, good Marcel! how can you suppose such a thing?" said M. Hardy, in a tone of friendly reproach; "no! but I do not like to tell you of my happiness, till it is complete; and I am not yet quite certain——"

A servant entered at this moment and said to M. Hardy: "Sir, there is an old gentleman who wishes to speak to you on very pressing business."

"So soon!" said M. Hardy, with a slight movement of impatience. "With your permission, my friend." Then, as M. de Blessac seemed about to withdraw into the next room, M. Hardy added with a smile: "No, no; do not stir. Your presence will shorten the interview."

"But if it be a matter of business, my friend?"

"I do everything openly, as you know." Then, addressing the servant, M. Hardy bade him: "Ask the gentleman to walk in."

"The postilion wishes to know if he is to wait?"

"Certainly: he will take M. de Blessac back to Paris."

The servant withdrew, and presently returned, introducing Rodin, with whom M. de Blessac was not acquainted, his treacherous bargain having been negotiated through another agent.

"M. Hardy?" said Rodin, bowing respectfully to the two friends, and looking from one to the other with an air of inquiry.

"That is my name, sir; what can I do to serve you?"

answered the manufacturer, kindly; for, at first sight of the humble and ill-dressed old man, he expected an application for assistance.

"M. François Hardy," repeated Rodin, as if he wished to make sure of the identity of the person.

"I have had the honor to tell you that I am he."

"I have a private communication to make to you, sir," said Rodin.

"You may speak, sir. This gentleman is my friend," said M. Hardy, pointing to M. de Blessac.

"But I wish to speak to you alone, sir," resumed Rodin.

M. de Blessac was again about to withdraw, when M. Hardy retained him with a glance, and said to Rodin kindly, for he thought his feelings might be hurt by asking a favor in presence of a third party: "Permit me to inquire if it is on your account or on mine, that you wish this interview to be secret?"

"On your account entirely, sir," answered Rodin.

"Then, sir," said M. Hardy, with some surprise, "you may speak out. I have no secrets from this gentleman."

After a moment's silence, Rodin resumed, addressing himself to M. Hardy: "Sir, you deserve, I know, all the good that is said of you; and you therefore command the sympathy of every honest man."

"I hope so, sir."

"Now, as an honest man, I come to render you a service."

"And this service, sir——"

"To reveal to you an infamous piece of treachery, of which you have been the victim."

"I think, sir, you must be deceived."

"I have the proofs of what I assert."

"Proofs?"

"The written proofs of the treachery that I come to reveal: I have them here," answered Rodin. "In a word, a man whom you believed your friend, has shamefully deceived you, sir."

"And the name of this man?"

"M. Marcel de Blessac," replied Rodin.

On these words, M. de Blessac started, and became pale as death. He could hardly murmur: "Sir——"

But, without looking at his friend, or perceiving his agitation, M. Hardy seized his hand, and exclaimed hastily: "Silence, my friend!" Then, whilst his eye flashed with indignation, he turned towards Rodin, who had not ceased to look him full in the face, and said to him, with an air of lofty disdain: "What! do you accuse M. de Blessac?"

"Yes, I accuse him," replied Rodin, briefly.

"Do you know him?"

"I have never seen him."

"Of what do you accuse him? And how dare you say that he has betrayed me?"

"Two words, if you please," said Rodin, with an emotion which he appeared hardly able to restrain. "If one man of honor sees another about to be slain by an assassin, ought he not give the alarm of murder?"

"Yes, sir; but what has that to do——"

"In my eyes, sir, certain treasons are as criminal as murders: I have come to place myself between the assassin and his victim."

"The assassin? the victim?" said M. Hardy more and more astonished.

"You doubtless know M. de Blessac's writing?" said Rodin.

"Yes, sir."

"Then read this," said Rodin, drawing from his pocket a letter, which he handed to M. Hardy.

Casting now for the first time a glance at M. de Blessac, the manufacturer drew back a step, terrified at the death-like paleness of this man, who, struck dumb with shame, could not find a word to justify himself; for he was far from possessing the audacious effrontery necessary to carry him through his treachery.

"Marcel!" cried M. Hardy, in alarm, and deeply agitated by this unexpected blow: "Marcel! how pale you are! you do not answer!"

"Marcel! this, then, is M. de Blessac?" cried Rodin, feigning the most painful surprise. "Oh, sir, if I had known——"

"But don't you hear this man, Marcel?" cried M. Hardy. "He says that you have betrayed me infamously." He seized the hand of M. de Blessac. That hand was cold as ice. "Oh, God! Oh, God!" said M. Hardy, drawing back in horror: "he makes no answer!"

"Since I am in presence of M. de Blessac," resumed Rodin, "I am forced to ask him, if he can deny having addressed many letters to the Rue du Milieu des Ursins, at Paris under cover of M. Rodin."

M. de Blessac remained dumb. M. Hardy, still unwilling to believe what he saw and heard, convulsively tore open the letter, which Rodin had just delivered to him, and read the first few lines—interrupting the perusal with exclama-

tions of grief and amazement. He did not require to finish the letter, to convince himself of the black treachery of M. de Blessac. He staggered; for a moment his senses seemed to abandon him. The horrible discovery made him giddy, and his head swam on his first look down into that abyss of infamy. The loathsome letter dropped from his trembling hands. But soon indignation, rage, and scorn succeeded this moment of despair, and rushing, pale and terrible, upon M. de Blessac: "Wretch!" he exclaimed, with a threatening gesture. But, pausing as in the act to strike: "No!" he added, with fearful calmness. "It would be to soil my hand."

He turned towards Rodin, who had approached hastily, as if to interpose. "It is not worth while chastising a wretch," said M. Hardy; "But I will press your honest hand, sir—for you have had the courage to unmask a traitor and a coward."

"Sir!" cried M. de Blessac, overcome with shame; "I am at your orders—and——"

He could not finish. The sound of voices was heard behind the door, which opened violently, and an aged woman entered, in spite of the efforts of the servant, exclaiming in an agitated voice: "I tell you, I must speak instantly to your master."

On hearing this voice, and at sight of the pale, weeping woman, M. Hardy, forgetting M. de Blessac, Rodin, the infamous treachery, and all, fell back a step, and exclaimed: "Madame Dupare! you here! What is the matter?"

"Oh, sir! a great misfortune——"

"Margaret!" cried M. Hardy, in a tone of despair.

"She is gone, sir!"

"Gone!" repeated M. Hardy, as horrorstruck as if a thunderbolt had fallen at his feet. "Margaret gone!"

"All is discovered. Her mother took her away—three days ago!" said the unhappy woman, in a failing voice.

"Gone! Margaret! It is not true. You deceive me," cried M. Hardy. Refusing to hear more, wild, despairing, he rushed out of the house, threw himself into his carriage, to which the post-horses were still harnessed, waiting for M. de Blessac, and said to the postilion: "To Paris! as fast as you can go!"

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As the carriage, rapid as lightning, started upon the road to Paris, the wind brought nearer the distant sound of the

war-song of the Wolves, who were rushing towards the factory. In this impending destruction, see Rodin's subtle hand, administering his fatal blows to clear his way up to the chair of St. Peter, to which he aspired. His tireless, wily course can hardly be darker shadowed by aught save that dread coming horror the Cholera, whose aid he evoked, and whose health the Bacchanal Queen wildly drank.

That once gay girl, and her poor famished sister; the fair patrician and her Oriental lover; Agricola, the workman, and his veteran father; the smiling Rose-Pompon, and the prematurely withered Jacques Rennepont; Father d'Aigrigny, the mock priest; and Gabriel, the true disciple; with the rest that have been named and others yet to be pictured, in the blaze of the bolts of their life's paths, will be seen in the third and concluding part of this romance entitled, "THE WANDERING JEW: REDEMPTION."

PART THIRD.—THE REDEMPTION.

CHAPTER I.

THE WANDERING JEW'S CHASTISEMENT.

'TIS night—the moon is brightly shining, the brilliant stars are sparkling in a sky of melancholy calmness, the shrill whistlings of a northerly wind—cold, bleak, and evil-bearing—are increasing: winding about, and bursting into violent blasts, with their harsh and hissing gusts, they are sweeping the heights of Montmartre. A man is standing on the very summit of the hill; his lengthened shadow, thrown out by the moon's pale beams, darkens the rocky ground in the distance. The traveller is surveying the huge city lying at his feet—the City of Paris—from whose profundities are cast up its towers, cupolas, domes, and steeples, in the bluish moisture of the horizon; while from the very centre of this sea of stones is rising a luminous vapor, reddening the

starry azure of the sky above. It is the distant light of a myriad lamps which at night, the season for pleasure, is illuminating the noisy capital.

"No!" said the traveller, "it will not be. The Lord surely will not suffer it. Twice is quite enough. Five centuries ago, the avenging hand of the Almighty drove me hither from the depths of Asia. A solitary wanderer, I left in my track more mourning, despair, disaster, and death, than the innumerable armies of a hundred devastating conquerors could have produced. I then entered this city, and it was decimated. Two centuries ago that inexorable hand which led me through the world again conducted me here; and on that occasion, as on the previous one, that scourge, which at intervals the Almighty binds to my footsteps, ravaged this city, attacking first my brethren, already wearied by wretchedness and toil. My brethren! through me—the laborer of Jerusalem, cursed by the Lord, who in my person cursed the race of laborers—a race always suffering, always disinherited, always slaves, who, like me, go on, on, on, without rest or intermission, without recompense, or hope; until at length, women, men, children, and old men, die under their iron yoke of self-murder, that others in their turn then take up, borne from age to age on their willing but aching shoulders. And here again, for the third time, in the course of five centuries, I have arrived at the summit of one of the hills which overlooks the city; and perhaps I bring again with me terror, desolation, and death. And this unhappy city, intoxicated in a whirl of joys, and nocturnal revelries, knows nothing about it—oh! it knows not that I am at its very gate. But no! no! my presence will not be a source of fresh calamity to it. The Lord, in His unsearchable wisdom, has brought me hither across France, making me avoid on my route all but the humblest villages, so that no increase of the funeral knell has marked my journey. And then, moreover, the spectre has left me—that spectre, livid and green, with its deep bloodshot eyes. When I touched the soil of France, its moist and icy hand abandoned mine—it disappeared. And yet I feel the atmosphere of death surrounding me still. There is no cessation; the biting gusts of this sinister wind, which envelop me in their breath, seem by their envenomed breath to propagate the scourge. Doubtless the anger of the Lord is appeased. Maybe, my presence here is meant only as a threat, intending to bring those to their senses whom it ought to intimidate. It must be so; for were it otherwise, it would, on the contrary, strike

a loud-sounding blow of greater terror, casting at once dread and death into the very heart of the country, into the bosom of this immense city. Oh, no! no! the Lord will have mercy; He will not condemn me to this new affliction. Alas! in this city my brethren are more numerous and more wretched than in any other. And must I bring death to them? No! the Lord will have mercy; for, alas! the seven descendants of my sister are at last all united in this city. And must I bring death to them? Death! instead of that immediate assistance they stand so much in need of? For that woman who, like myself, wanders from one end of the world into the other, has gone now on her everlasting journey, after having confounded their enemies' plots. In vain did she foretell that great evils still threatened those who are akin to me through my sister's blood. The unseen hand by which I am led, drives that woman away from me, even as though it were a whirlwind that swept her on. In vain she entreated and implored at the moment she was leaving those who are so dear to me.—At least, O Lord, permit me to stay until I shall have finished my task! Onward! A few days, for mercy's sake, only a few days! Onward! I leave these whom I am protecting on the very brink of an abyss! Onward! Onward!! And the wandering star is launched afresh on its perpetual course. But her voice traversed through space, calling me to the assistance of my own! When her voice reached me I felt that the offspring of my sister were still exposed to fearful dangers: those dangers are still increasing. Oh, say, say, Lord! shall the descendants of my sister escape those woes which for so many centuries have oppressed my race? Wilt Thou pardon me in them? Wilt Thou punish me in them? Oh! lead them, that they may obey the last wishes of their ancestor. Guide them, that they may join their charitable hearts, their powerful strength, their best wisdom, and their immense wealth, and work together for the future happiness of mankind, thereby, perhaps, enabled to ransom me from my eternal penalties. Let those divine words of the Son of Man, "*Love ye one another!*" be their only aim; and by the assistance of their all-powerful words, let them contend against and vanquish those false priests who have trampled on the precepts of love, of peace, and hope commanded by the Saviour, setting up in their stead the precepts of hatred, violence, and despair. Those false shepherds, supported by the powerful and wealthy of the world, who in all times have been their accomplices, instead of asking here below a

little happiness for my brethren, who have been suffering and groaning for centuries, dare to utter, in Thy name, O Lord! that the poor must always be doomed to the tortures of this world, and that it is criminal in Thine eyes that they should either wish for or hope a mitigation of their sufferings on earth, because the happiness of the few and the wretchedness of nearly all mankind is Thine almighty will. Blasphemies! is it not the contrary of these homicidal words that is more worthy of the name of Divine will? Hear me, O Lord! for mercy's sake. Snatch from their enemies the descendants of my sister, from the artisan up to the king's son. Do not permit them to crush the germ of a mighty and fruitful association, which, perhaps, under Thy protection, may take its place among the records of the happiness of mankind. Suffer me, O Lord! to unite those whom they are endeavoring to divide—to defend those whom they are attacking. Suffer me to bring hope to those from whom hope has fled, to give courage to those who are weak, to uphold those whom evil threatens, and to sustain those who would persevere in well-doing. And then, perhaps, their struggles, their devotedness, their virtues, their miseries might expiate my sin. Yes, mine—misfortune, misfortune alone, made me unjust and wicked. O Lord! since Thine almighty hand hath brought me hither, for some end unknown to me, disarm Thyself, I implore Thee, of Thine anger, and let not me be the instrument of Thy vengeance! There is enough of mourning in the earth these two years past—Thy creatures have fallen by millions in my footsteps, The world is decimated. A veil of mourning extends from one end of the globe to the other. I have travelled from Asia even to the Frozen Pole, and death has followed in my wake. Dost Thou not hear, O Lord! the universal wailings that mount up to Thee? Have mercy upon all, and upon me. One day, grant me but a single day, that I may collect the descendants of my sister together, and save them!" And uttering these words, the wanderer fell upon his knees, and raised his hands to heaven in a suppliant attitude.

Suddenly, the wind howled with redoubled violence; its sharp whistlings changed to a tempest. The Wanderer trembled, and exclaimed in a voice of terror, "O Lord! the blast of death is howling in its rage. It appears as though a whirlwind were lifting me up. Lord, wilt Thou not, then, hear my prayer? The spectre! O! do I behold the spectre? Yes, there it is; its cadaverous countenance is agitated by convulsive throes, its red eyes are rolling in their orbits.

Begone! begone! Oh! its hand—its icy hand has seized on mine! Mercy, Lord, have mercy! 'Onward!' Oh, Lord! this scourge, this terrible avenging scourge! Must I, then, again carry it into this city, must my poor wretched brethren be the first to fall under it—though already so miserable? Mercy, mercy! 'Onward!' And the descendants of my sister—oh, pray, have mercy, mercy! 'Onward!' O Lord, have pity on me! I can no longer keep my footing on the ground, the spectre is dragging me over the brow of the hill; my course is as rapid as the death-bearing wind that whistles in my track; I already approach the walls of the city. Oh, mercy, Lord, mercy on the descendants of my sister—spare them! do not compel me to be their executioner, and let them triumph over their enemies. Onward, onward! The ground is fleeing from under me; I am already at the city gate; oh, yet, Lord, yet there is time; oh, have mercy on this slumbering city, that it may not even now awaken with the lamentations of terror, of despair and death! O Lord, I touch the threshold of the gate; verily Thou willest it so then. 'Tis done—Paris! the scourge is in thy bosom! oh, cursed, cursed evermore am I. *Onward! on! on!*" *

CHAPTER II.

THE DESCENDANTS OF THE WANDERING JEW.

THAT lonely wayfarer whom we have heard so plaintively urging to be relieved of his gigantic burden of misery, spoke of "his sister's descendants" being of all ranks, from the working man to the king's son. They were seven in number, who had, in the year 1832, been led to Paris, directly or indirectly, by a bronze medal which distinguished them from others, bearing these words:—

VICTIM of L. C. D. J. Pray for me! ——— PARIS, February the 13th, 1682.	IN PARIS, Rue St. François, No. 3, In a century and a half you will be. February the 13th, 1832. ——— PRAY FOR ME!

* In 1346, the celebrated Black Death ravaged the earth, presenting the same symptoms as the cholera, and the same inexplicable phenomena as to its progress and the results in its route. In 1660 a similar epidemic decimated the world. It is well known that when the cholera first broke out in Paris, it had taken a wide and unaccountable leap; and, also memorable, a north-east wind prevailed during its utmost fury [illegible]

The son of the King of Mundi had lost his father and his domains in India by the irresistible march of the English, and was but in title Prince Djalma. Spite of attempts to make his departure from the East delayed until after the period when he could have obeyed his medal's command, he had reached France by the second month of 1832. Nevertheless, the results of shipwreck had detained him from Paris till after that date. A second possessor of this token had remained unaware of its existence, only discovered by accident. But an enemy who sought to thwart the union of these seven members, had shut her up in a mad-house, from which she was released only after that day. Not alone was she in imprisonment. An old Bonapartist, General Simon, Marshal of France, and Duke de Ligny, had left a wife in Russian exile, while he (unable to follow Napoleon to St. Helena) continued to fight the English in India by means of Prince Djalma's Sepoys, whom he drilled. On the latter's defeat, he had meant to accompany his young friend to Europe, induced the more by finding that the latter's mother, a Frenchwoman, had left him such another bronze medal as he knew his wife to have had.

Unhappily, his wife had perished in Siberia, without his knowing it, any more than he did, that she had left twin daughters, Rose and Blanche. Fortunately for them, one who had served their father in the Grenadiers of the Guard, Francis Baudoin, nicknamed Dagobert, undertook to fulfil the dying mother's wishes, inspired by the medal. Saving a check at Leipsic, where one Morok the lion-tamer's panther had escaped from its cage and killed Dagobert's horse, and a subsequent imprisonment (which the Wandering Jew's succoring hand had terminated) the soldier and his orphan charges had reached Paris in safety and in time. But there, a renewal of the foe's attempt had gained its end. By skilful devices, Dagobert and his son Agricola were drawn out of the way while Rose and Blanche Simon were decoyed into a nunnery, under the eyes of Dagobert's wife. But she had been bound against interfering by the influence of the Jesuit confessional. The fourth was M. Hardy, a manufacturer, and the fifth, Jacques Rennepont, a drunken scamp of a workman, who were more easily fended off, the latter in a sponging house, the former by a friend's lure. Adrienne de Cardoville, daughter of the Count of Rennepont, who had also been Duke of Cardoville, was the lady who had been unwarrantably placed in the lunatic asylum. The fifth, unaware of the medal, was Gabriel, a

youth, who had been brought up, though a foundling, in Dagobert's family, as a brother to Agricola. He had entered holy orders, and more, was a Jesuit, in name though not in heart. Unlike the others, his return from abroad had been smoothed. He had signed away all his future prospects, for the benefit of the order of Loyola, and, moreover, executed a more complete deed of transfer on the day, the 13th of February, 1832, when he, alone of the heirs, stood in the room of the house, No. 3, Rue St. François, claiming what was a vast surprise for the Jesuits, who, a hundred and fifty years before, had discovered that Count Marius de Rennepont had secreted a considerable amount of his wealth, all of which had been confiscated to them, in those painful days of dragoonings, and the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. They had bargained for some thirty or forty millions of francs to be theirs, by educating Gabriel into resigning his inheritance to them, but it was two hundred and twelve millions which the Jesuit representatives (Father d'Aigrigny and his secretary, Rodin) were amazed to hear their nursling placed in possession of. They had the treasure in their hands, in fact, when a woman of strangely sad beauty had mysteriously entered the room where the will had been read, and laid a paper before the notary. It was a codicil, duly drawn up and signed, deferring the carrying out of the testament until the first day of June the same year. The Jesuits fled from the house, in rage and intense disappointment. Father d'Aigrigny was so stupor-stricken at the defeat, that he bade his secretary at once write off to Rome that the Rennepont inheritance had escaped them, and hopes to seize it again were utterly at an end. Upon this, Rodin had revolted, and shown that he had authority to command where he had, so far, most humbly obeyed. Many such spies hang about their superior's heels, with full powers to become the governor in turn, at a moment's notice. Thenceforward, he, Rodin, had taken the business into his own hands. He had let Rose and Blanche Simon out of the convent into their father's arms. He had gone in person to release Adrienne de Cardoville from the asylum. More, having led her to sigh for Prince Djalma, he prompted the latter to burn for her.

He let not M. Hardy escape. A friend whom the latter treated as a brother, had been shown up to him as a mere spy of the Jesuits; the woman whom he adored, a wedded woman, alas! who had loved him in spite of her vows, had been betrayed. Her mother had compelled her to hide her

shame in America, and, as she had often said—"Much as you are endeared to me, I cannot waver between you and my mother!" so she had obeyed, without one farewell word to him. Confess, Rodin was a more dextrous man than his late master! In the pages that ensue farther proofs of his superiority in baseness and satanic heartlessness will not be wanting.

CHAPTER III.

THE ATTACK.

On M. Hardy's learning from the confidential go-between of the lovers, that his mistress had been taken away by her mother, he turned from Rodin and dashed away in a post-carriage. At the same moment, as loud as the rattle of the wheels, there arose the shouts of a band of workmen and rioters, hired by the Jesuit's emissaries, coming to attack Hardy's operatives. An old grudge long existing between them and a rival manufacturer's—Baron Tripeaud—laborers, fanned the flames. When M. Hardy had left the factory, Rodin, who was not prepared for this sudden departure, returned slowly to his hackney-coach; but he stopped suddenly, and started with pleasure and surprise, when he saw, at some distance, Marshal Simon and his father advancing towards one of the wings of the Common Dwelling-house; for an accidental circumstance had so far delayed the interview of the father and son.

"Very well!" said Rodin. "Better and better! Now, only let my man have found out and persuaded little Rose-Pompon!"

And Rodin hastened towards his hackney-coach. At this moment, the wind, which continued to rise, brought to the ears of the Jesuit the war song of the approaching Wolves.

The workman was in the garden. The marshal said to him, in a voice of such deep emotion that the old man started; "Father, I am very unhappy."

A painful expression, until then concealed, suddenly darkened the countenance of the marshal.

"You unhappy?" cried father Simon, anxiously, as he pressed nearer to the marshal.

"For some days, my daughters have appeared constrained in manner, and lost in thought. During the first moments of our re-union, they were mad with joy and happiness.

Suddenly, all has changed; they are becoming more and more sad. Yesterday, I detected tears in their eyes; then deeply moved, I clasped them in my arms, and implored them to tell me the cause of their sorrow. Without answering, they threw themselves on my neck, and covered my face with their tears."

"It is strange. To what do you attribute this alteration?"

"Sometimes, I think I have not sufficiently concealed from them the grief occasioned me by the loss of their mother, and they are perhaps miserable that they do not suffice for my happiness. And yet (inexplicable as it is) they seem not only to understand, but to share my sorrow. Yesterday, Blanche said to me: 'How much happier still should we be, if our mother were with us!——'"

"Sharing your sorrow, they cannot reproach you with it. There must be some other cause for their grief."

"Yes," said the marshal, looking fixedly at his father; "yes—but to penetrate this secret—it would be necessary not to leave them."

"What do you mean?"

"First learn, father, what are the duties which would keep me here; then you shall know those which may take me away from you, from my daughters, and from my other child."

"What other child?"

"The son of my old friend, the Indian Prince."

"Djalma? Is there anything the matter with him?"

"Father, he frightens me. I told you, father, of his mad and unhappy passion for Mdlle. de Cardoville."

"Does that frighten you, my son?" said the old man, looking at the marshal with surprise. "Djalma is only eighteen, and, at that age, one love drives away another."

"You have no idea of the ravages which the passion has already made in the ardent, indomitable boy; sometimes, fits of savage ferocity follow the most painful dejection. Yesterday, I came suddenly upon him; his eyes were bloodshot, his features contracted with rage; yielding to an impulse of mad fury, he was piercing with his poniard a cushion of red cloth, whilst he exclaimed, panting for breath, 'Ha! blood!—I will have blood?' 'Unhappy boy!' I said to him, 'what means this insane passion?' 'I'm killing the man!' replied he, in a hollow and savage voice: it is thus he designates his supposed rival."

"There is indeed something terrible," said the old man, "in such a passion, in such a heart."

"At other times," resumed the marshal, "it is against Mdlle. de Cardoville that his rage bursts forth; and at others, against himself. I have been obliged to remove his weapons, for a man who came with him from Java, and who appears much attached to him, has informed me that he suspected him of entertaining some thoughts of suicide."

"Unfortunate boy!"

"Well, father," said Marshal Simon, with profound bitterness; "it is at the moment when my daughters and my adopted son require all my solicitude, that I am perhaps on the eve of quitting them."

"Of quitting them?"

"Yes, to fulfil a still more sacred duty than that imposed by friendship or family," said the marshal, in so grave and solemn a tone, that his father exclaimed, with deep emotion: "What can this duty be?"

"Father," said the marshal, after remaining a moment in thoughtful silence, "who made me what I am? Who gave me the ducal title, and the marshal's bâton?"

"Napoleon."

"For you, the stern republican, I know that he lost all his value, when from the first citizen of a Republic he became an emperor."

"I cursed his weakness," said Father Simon, sadly; "the demi-god sank into a man."

"But for me, father—for me, the soldier, who have always fought beside him, or under his eye—for me, whom he raised from the lowest rank in the army to the highest—for me, whom he loaded with benefits and marks of affection—for me, he was more than a hero, he was a friend—and there was as much gratitude as admiration in my idolatry for him. When he was exiled, I would fain have shared his exile; they refused me that favor; then I conspired, then I drew my sword against those who had robbed his son of the crown which France had given him."

"And, in your position, you did well, Pierre; without sharing your admiration, I understood your gratitude. The projects of exile, the conspiracies—I approved them all—you know it."

"Well, then, that disinherited child, in whose name I conspired seventeen years ago, is now of an age to wield his father's sword."

"Napoleon II.!" exclaimed the old man, looking at his son with surprise and extreme anxiety; "the king of Rome!"

"King? no; he is no longer king. Napoleon? no; he is

no longer Napoleon. They have given him some Austrian name, because the other frightened them. Everything frightens them. Do you know what they are doing with the son of the Emperor?" resumed the marshal, with painful excitement. "They are torturing him—killing him by inches!"

"Who told you this?"

"Somebody who knows, whose words are but too true. Yes; the son of the Emperor struggles with all his strength against a premature death. With his eyes turned towards France, he waits—he waits—and no one comes—no one—out of all the men that his father made as great as they once were little, not one thinks of that crowned child, whom they are stifling, till he dies."

"But you think of him?"

"Yes; but I had first to learn—oh! there is no doubt of it, for I have not derived all my information from the same source—I had first to learn the cruel fate of this youth, to whom I also swore allegiance; for one day, as I have told you, the Emperor, proud and loving father as he was, showed him to me in his cradle, and said: 'My old friend, you will be to the son what you have been to the father: who loves us, loves our France.'"

"Yes, I know it. Many times you have repeated those words to me, and, like yourself, I have been moved by them."

"Well, father! suppose, informed of the sufferings of the son of the Emperor, I had seen—with the positive certainty that I was not deceived—a letter from a person of high rank in the court of Vienna, offering to a man that was still faithful to the Emperor's memory, the means of communicating with the King of Rome, and perhaps of saving him from his tormentors——"

"What next?" said the workman, looking fixedly at his son. "Suppose Napoleon II. once at liberty——"

"What next?" exclaimed the marshal. Then he added, in a suppressed voice: "Do you think, father, that France is insensible to the humiliations she endures? Do you think that the memory of the Emperor is extinct? No, no; it is, above all, in the days of our country's degradation, that she whispers that sacred name. How would it be, then, were that name to rise glorious on the frontier, reviving in his son? Do you not think that the heart of all France would beat for him?"

"This implies a conspiracy—against the present government—with Napoleon II. for a watchword," said the workman. "This is very serious."

"I told you, father, that I was very unhappy; judge if it be not so," cried the marshal. "Not only I ask myself, if I ought to abandon my children and you, to run the risk of so daring an enterprise, but I ask myself if I am not bound to the present government, which, in acknowledging my rank and title, if it bestowed no favor, at least did me an act of justice. How shall I decide?—abandon all that I love, or remain insensible to the tortures of the son of the Emperor—of that Emperor to whom I owe everything—to whom I have sworn fidelity, both to himself and child? Shall I lose this only opportunity, perhaps, of saving him, or shall I conspire in his favor? Tell me, if I exaggerate what I owe to the memory of the Emperor? Decide for me, father! During a whole sleepless night, I strove to discover, in the midst of this chaos, the line prescribed by honor; but I only wandered from indecision to indecision. You alone, father—you alone, I repeat, can direct me."

After remaining for some moments in deep thought, the old man was about to answer, when some person, running across the little garden, opened the door hastily, and entered the room in which were the marshal and his father. It was Olivier, the young workman, who had been able to effect his escape from the village in which the Wolves had assembled.

"M. Simon! M. Simon!" cried he, pale, and panting for breath. "They are here—close at hand. They have come to attack the factory."

"Who?" cried the old man, rising hastily.

"The Wolves, quarrymen, and stonecutters, joined on the road by a crowd of people from the neighborhood, and vagabonds from town. Do you not hear them? They are shouting, 'Death to the Devourers!'"

The clamor was indeed approaching, and grew more and more distinct.

"It is the same noise that I heard just now," said the marshal, rising in his turn.

"There are more than two hundred of them, M. Simon," said Olivier; "they are armed with clubs and stones, and unfortunately the greater part of our workmen are in Paris. We are not above forty here in all; the women and children are already flying to their chambers, screaming for terror. Do you not hear them?"

The ceiling shook beneath the tread of many hasty feet.

"Will this attack be a serious one?" said the marshal to his father, who appeared more and more dejected.

"Very serious," said the old man; "there is nothing more

fierce than these combats between different unions; and everything has been done lately to excite the people of the neighborhood against the factory."

"If you are so inferior in number," said the marshal, "you must begin by barricading all the doors—and then——"

He was unable to conclude. A burst of ferocious cries shook the windows of the room, and seemed so near and loud, that the marshal, his father, and the young workman, rushed out into the little garden, which was bounded on one side by a wall that separated it from the fields. Suddenly, whilst the shouts redoubled in violence, a shower of large stones, intended to break the windows of the house, smashed some of the panes on the first story, struck against the wall, and fell into the garden, all around the marshal and his father. By a fatal chance, one of these large stones struck the old man on the head. He staggered, bent forward, and fell bleeding into the arms of Marshal Simon, just as arose from without, with increased fury, the savage cries of, "Death to the Devourers!"

CHAPTER IV.

THE WOLVES AND THE DEVOURERS.

It was a frightful thing to view the approach of the lawless crowd, whose first act of hostility had been so fatal to Marshal Simon's father. One wing of the Common Dwelling-house, which joined the garden-wall on that side, was next to the fields. It was there that the Wolves began their attack. The precipitation of their march, the halt they had made at two public-houses on the road, their ardent impatience for the approaching struggle, had inflamed these men to a high pitch of savage excitement. Having discharged their first shower of stones, most of the assailants stooped down to look for more ammunition. Some of them, to do so with greater ease, held their bludgeons between their teeth; others had placed them against the wall; here and there, groups had formed tumultuously round the principal leaders of the band; the most neatly dressed of these men wore frocks, with caps, whilst others were almost in rags, for, as we have already said, many of the hangers-on at the barriers, and people without any profession, had joined the troop of the Wolves, whether welcome or not. Some hideous women, with tattered garments, who always seem to follow in the track of

such people, accompanied them on this occasion, and, by their cries and fury, inflamed still more the general excitement. One of them, tall, robust, with purple complexion, blood-shot eyes, and toothless jaws, had a handkerchief over her head, from beneath which escaped her yellow, frowsy hair. Over her ragged gown, she wore an old plaid shawl, crossed over her bosom, and tied behind her back. This hag seemed possessed with a demon. She had tucked up her half-torn sleeves; in one hand she brandished a stick, in the other she grasped a huge stone; her companions called her Ciboule (scullion).

This horrible hag exclaimed, in a hoarse voice: "I'll bite the women of the factory; I'll make them bleed."

The ferocious words were received with applause by her companions, and with savage cries of "Ciboule forever!" which excited her to frenzy.

Amongst the other leaders, was a small, dry, pale man, with the face of a ferret, and a black beard all round the chin; he wore a scarlet Greek cap, and beneath his long blouse, perfectly new, appeared a pair of neat cloth trousers, strapped over thin boots. This man was evidently of a different condition of life from that of the other persons in the troop; it was he, in particular, who ascribed the most irritating and insulting language to the workmen of the factory, with regard to the inhabitants of the neighborhood. He howled a great deal, but he carried neither stick nor stone. A full-faced, fresh-colored man, with a formidable bass voice, like a chorister's, asked him: "Will you not have a shot at those impious dogs, who might bring down the Cholera on the country, as the curate told us?"

"I will have a better shot than you," said the little man, with a singular, sinister smile.

"And with what, I'd like to see?"

"Probably, with this," said the little man, stooping to pick up a large stone; but, as he bent, a well-filled though light bag, which he appeared to carry under his blouse, fell to the ground.

"Look, you are losing both bag and baggage," said the other; "it does not seem very heavy."

"They are samples of wool," answered the man with the ferret's face, as he hastily picked up the bag, and replaced it under his blouse; then he added: "Attention! the big blaster is going to speak."

And, in fact, he who exercised the most complete ascendency over this irritated crowd was the terrible quarryman.

His gigantic form towered so much above the multitude, that his great head, bound in its ragged handkerchief, and his Herculean shoulders, covered with a fallow goat-skin, were always visible above the level of that dark and swarming crowd, only relieved here and there by a few women's caps, like so many white points. Seeing to what a degree of exasperation the minds of the crowd had reached, the small number of honest, but misguided workmen, who had allowed themselves to be drawn into this dangerous enterprise, under the pretext of a quarrel between rival unions, now fearing for the consequences of the struggle, tried, but too late, to abandon the main body. Pressed close, and as it were, girt in with the more hostile groups, dreading to pass for cowards, or to expose themselves to the bad treatment of the majority, they were forced to wait for a more favorable moment to effect their escape. To the savage cheers, which had accompanied the first discharge of stones, succeeded a deep silence commanded by the stentorian voice of the quarryman.

"The Wolves have howled," he exclaimed; "let us wait and see how the Devourers will answer, and when they will begin the fight."

"We must draw them out of their factory, and fight them on neutral ground," said the little man with the ferret's face, who appeared to be the thieves' advocate; "otherwise there would be trespass."

"What do we care about trespass?" cried the horrible hag, Ciboule; "in or out, I will tear the chits of the factory."

"Yes, yes," cried other hideous creatures, as ragged as Ciboule herself; "we must not leave all to the men."

"We must have our fun too!"

"The women of the factory say that all the women of the neighborhood are drunken drabs," cried the little man with the ferret's face.

"Good! we'll pay them for it."

"The women shall have their share."

"That's our business."

"They like to sing in their Common House," cried Ciboule; "we will make them sing the wrong side of their mouths, in the key of 'Oh, dear me!'"

This pleasantry was received with shouts, hootings, and furious stamping of feet, to which the stentorian voice of the quarryman put a term by roaring: "Silence!"

"Silence! silence!" repeated the crowd. "Hear the blaster!"

"If the Devourers are cowards enough not to dare to show themselves, after a second volley of stones, there is a door down there which we can break open, and we will soon hunt them from their holes."

"It would be better to draw them out, so that none might remain in the factory," said the little old man with the ferret's face, who appeared to have some secret motive.

"A man fights where he can," cried the quarryman, in a voice of thunder; "all right, if we can but once catch hold. We could fight on a sloping roof, or on the top of a wall—couldn't we, my Wolves?"

"Yes, yes!" cried the crowd, still more excited by those savage words; "if they don't come out, we will break in."

"We will see their fine palace!"

"The pagans haven't even a chapel," said the bass voice. "The curate has damned them all!"

"Why should they have a palace, and we nothing but dog-kennels?"

"Hardy's workmen say that kennels are good enough for such as you," said the little man with the ferret's face.

"Yes, yes! they said so."

"We'll break all their traps."

"We'll pull down their bazaar."

"We'll throw the house out of the windows."

"When we have made the mealy-mouthed chits sing," cried Ciboule, "we will make them dance to the clatter of stones on their heads."

"Come, my Wolves! attention!" cried the quarryman, still in the same stentorian voice; "one more volley, and if the Devourers do not come out, down with the door!"

This proposition was received with cheers of savage ardor, and the quarryman, whose voice rose above the tumult, cried with all the strength of his herculean lungs: "Attention, my Wolves. Make ready! all together. Now, are you ready?"

"Yes, yes—all ready!"

"Then, present!—fire!" And, for the second time, a shower of enormous stones poured upon that side of the Common Dwelling-house which was turned towards the fields. A part of these projectiles broke such of the windows as had been spared by the first volley. To the sharp smashing and cracking of glass were joined the ferocious cries uttered in chorus by this formidable mob, drunk with its own excesses: "Death to the Devourers!"

Soon these outcries became perfectly frantic, when,

through the broken windows, the assailants perceived women running in terror, some with children in their arms, and others raising their hands to heaven, calling aloud for help; whilst a few, bolder than the rest, leaned out of the windows, and tried to fasten the outside blinds.

"There come the ants out of their holes!" cried Ciboule, stooping to picking up a stone. "We must have a fling at them for luck!" The stone, hurled by the steady, masculine hand of the virago, went straight to its mark, and struck an unfortunate woman who was trying to close one of the shutters.

"Hit in the white!" cried the hideous creature.

"Well done, Ciboule!—you've rapped her *coker-nut!*" cried a voice.

"Ciboule forever!"

"Come out, you Devourers, if you dare!"

"They have said a hundred times, that the neighbors were too cowardly even to come and look at their house," squealed the little man with the ferret's face.

"And now they show the white feather!"

"If they will not come out," cried the quarryman, in a voice of thunder, "let us smoke them out!"

"Yes, yes!"

"Let's break open the door!"

"We are sure to find them!"

"Come on! come on!"

The crowd, with the quarryman at their head, and Ciboule not far from him, brandishing a stick, advanced tumultously towards one of the great doors. The ground shook beneath the rapid tread of the mob, which had now ceased shouting; but the confused, and, as it were, subterraneous noise, sounded even more ominous than those savage outcries. The Wolves soon arrived opposite the massive oaken door. At the moment the blaster raised a sledge-hammer, the door opened suddenly. Some of the most determined of the assailants were about to rush in at this entrance; but the quarryman stepped back, extending his arm as if to moderate their ardor and impose silence. Then his followers gathered round him.

The half-open door discovered a party of workmen, unfortunately by no means numerous, but with countenances full of resolution. They had armed themselves hastily with forks, iron bars, and clubs. Agricola, who was their leader, held in his hand a heavy sledge-hammer. The young workman was very pale; but the fire of his eye, his menacing

look, and the intrepid assurance of his bearing, showed that his father's blood boiled in his veins, and that in such a struggle he might become fear-inspiring. Yet he succeeded in restraining himself, and challenged the quarryman, in a firm voice: "What do you want?"

"A fight!" thundered the blaster.

"Yes, yes! a fight!" repeated the crowd.

"Silence, my Wolves!" cried the quarryman, as he turned round, and stretched forth his large hand towards the multitude. Then addressing Agricola, he said: "The Wolves have come to ask for a fight."

"With whom?"

"With the Devourers."

"There are no Devourers here," replied Agricola; "we are only peaceable workmen. So begone."

"Well! here are the Wolves, that will eat your quiet workmen."

"The Wolves will eat no one here," said Agricola, looking full at the quarryman, who approached him with a threatening air; "they can only frighten little children."

"Oh! you think so," said the quarryman, with a savage sneer. Then raising his weapon, he shook it in Agricola's face, exclaiming: "Is that any laughing matter?"

"Is that?" answered Agricola, with a rapid movement, parrying the stone-sledge with his own hammer.

"Iron against iron—hammer against hammer—that suits me," said the quarryman.

"It does not matter what suits you," answered Agricola, hardly able to restrain himself. "You have broken our windows, frightened our women, and wounded—perhaps killed—the oldest workman in the factory, who at this moment lies bleeding in the arms of his son." Here Agricola's voice trembled in spite of himself. "It is, I think, enough."

"No; the Wolves are hungry for more," answered the blaster; "you must come out (cowards that you are!), and fight us on the plain."

"Yes! yes! battle!—let them come out!" cried the crowd, howling, hissing, waving their sticks, and pushing further into the small space which separated them from the door.

"We will have no battle," answered Agricola: "we will not leave our home; but if you have the misfortune to pass this," said Agricola, throwing his cap upon the threshold, and setting his foot on it with an intrepid air, "if you

pass this, you attack us in our own house, and you will be answerable for all that may happen."

"There or elsewhere we will have the fight! the Wolves must eat the Devourers. Now for the attack!" cried the fierce quarryman, raising his hammer to strike Agricola.

But the latter, throwing himself on one side by a sudden leap, avoided the blow, and struck with his hammer full at the chest of the quarryman, who staggered for a moment, but instantly recovering his legs, rushed furiously on Agricola, crying: "Follow me, Wolves!"

CHAPTER V.

THE RETURN.

As soon as the combat had begun between Agricola and the blaster, the general fight became terrible, ardent, implacable. A flood of assailants, following the quarryman's steps, rushed into the house with irresistible fury; others, unable to force their way through this dreadful crowd, where the more impetuous squeezed, stifled, and crushed those who were less so, went round in another direction, broke through some lattice work, and thus placed the people of the factory, as it were, between two fires. Some resisted courageously; others, seeing Ciboule, followed by some of her horrible companions, and by several of the most ill-looking ruffians, hastily enter that part of the Common Dwelling-house in which the women had taken refuge, hurried in pursuit of this band; but some of the hag's companions, having faced about, and vigorously defended the entrance of the staircase against the workmen, Ciboule, with three or four like herself, and about the same number of no less ignoble men, rushed through the rooms, with the intention of robbing or destroying all that came in their way. A door, which at first resisted their efforts, was soon broken through; Ciboule rushed into the apartment with a stick in her hand, her hair dishevelled, furious, and, as it were, maddened with the noise and tumult. A beautiful young girl (it was Angela), who appeared anxious to defend the entrance to a second chamber, threw herself on her knees, pale and supplicating, and raising her clasped hands, exclaimed: "Do not hurt my mother!"

"I'll serve you out first, and your mother afterwards,"

replied the horrible woman, throwing herself on the poor girl, and endeavoring to tear her face with her nails, whilst the rest of the ruffianly band broke the glass and the clock with their sticks, and possessed themselves of some articles of wearing apparel.

Angela, struggling with Ciboule, uttered loud cries of distress, and still attempted to guard the room in which her mother had taken refuge; whilst the latter, leaning from the window, called Agricola to their assistance. The smith was now engaged with the huge blaster. In a close struggle, their hammers had become useless, and with bloodshot eyes and clinched teeth, chest to chest, and limbs twined together like two serpents, they made the most violent efforts to everthrow each other. Agricola, bent forward, held under his right arm the left leg of the quarryman, which he had seized in parrying a violent kick; but such was the Herculean strength of the leader of the Wolves, that he remained firm as a tower, though resting only on one leg. With the hand that was still free (for the other was griped by Agricola as in a vice), he endeavored with violent blows to break the jaws of the smith, who, leaning his head forward, pressed his forehead hard against the breast of his adversary.

"The Wolf will break the Devourer's teeth, and he shall devour no more," said the quarryman.

"You are no true Wolf," answered the smith, redoubling his efforts; "the true Wolves are honest fellows, and do not come ten against one"

"True or false, I will break your teeth."

"And I your paw," said the smith, giving so violent a wrench to the leg of the quarryman, that the latter uttered a cry of acute pain, and, with the rage of a wild beast, butting suddenly forward with his head, succeeded in biting Agricola in the side of the neck.

The pang of this bite forced Agricola to make a movement, which enabled the quarryman to disengage his leg. Then, with a superhuman effort, he threw himself with his whole weight on Agricola, and brought him to the ground, falling himself upon him.

At this juncture, Angela's mother, leaning from one of the windows of the Common Dwelling-house, exclaimed in a heart-rending voice: "Help, Agricola!—they are killing my child!"

"Let me go—and on my honor—I will fight you to-morrow, or when you will," said Agricola, panting for breath.

"No warmed-up food for me; I eat all hot," answered the quarryman, seizing the smith by the throat, whilst he tried to place one of his knees upon his chest.

"Help!—they are killing my child!" cried Angela's mother, in a voice of despair.

"Mercy! I ask mercy! Let me go!" said Agricola, making the most violent efforts to escape.

"I am too hungry," answered the quarryman.

Exasperated by the terror which Angela's danger occasioned him, Agricola redoubled his efforts, when the quarryman suddenly felt his thigh seized by the sharp teeth of a dog, and at the same instant received from a vigorous hand three or four heavy blows with a stick upon his head. He relaxed his grasp, and fell stunned upon his hand and knee, whilst he mechanically raised his other arm to parry the blows, which ceased as soon as Agricola was delivered.

"Father, you have saved me!" cried the smith, springing up. "If only I am in time to rescue Angela!"

"Run!—never mind me!" answered Dagobert; and Agricola rushed into the house.

Dagobert, accompanied by Spoil-sport, had come, as we have already said, to bring Marshal Simon's daughters to their grandfather. Arriving in the midst of the tumult, the soldier had collected a few workmen to defend the entrance of the chamber, to which the marshal's father had been carried in a dying state. It was from this post that the soldier had seen Agricola's danger. Soon after, the rush of the conflict separated Dagobert from the quarryman, who remained for some moments insensible. Arrived in two bounds at the Common Dwelling-house, Agricola succeeded in forcing his way through the men who defended the staircase, and rushed into the corridor that led to Angela's chamber. At the moment he reached it, the unfortunate girl was mechanically guarding her face with both hands against Ciboule, who, furious as the hyena over its prey, was trying to scratch and disfigure her.

To spring upon the horrible hag, seize her by her yellow hair with irresistible hand, drag her backwards, and then with one cuff, stretch her full length upon the ground, was for Agricola an achievement as rapid as thought. Furious with rage, Ciboule rose again almost instantly; but at this moment, several workmen, who had followed close upon Agricola, were able to attack with advantage, and whilst the smith lifted the fainting form of Angela, and carried her

into the next room, Ciboule and her band were driven from that part of the house.

After the first fire of the assault, the small number of real Wolves, who, as Agricola said, were in the main honest fellows, but had the weakness to let themselves be drawn into this enterprise, under the pretext of a quarrel between rival unions, seeing the excesses committed by the rabble who accompanied them, turned suddenly round, and ranged themselves on the side of the Devourers.

"There are no longer here either Wolves or Devourers," said one of the most determined Wolves to Olivier, with whom he had been fighting roughly and fairly; "there are none here but honest workmen, who must unite to drive out a set of scoundrels, that have come only to break and pillage."

"Yes," added another; "it was against our will that they began by breaking your windows."

"The big blaster did it all," said another; "the true Wolves wash their hands of him. We shall soon settle his account."

"We may fight every day—but we ought to esteem each other." *

This defection of a portion of the assailants (unfortunately but a small portion) gave new spirit to the workmen of the factory, and all together, Wolves and Devourers, though very inferior in number, opposed themselves to the band of vagabonds, who were proceeding to new excesses. Some of these wretches, still further excited by the little man with the ferret's face, a secret emissary of Baron Tripeaud, now rushed in a mass towards the workshops of M. Hardy. Then began a lamentable devastation. These people, seized with

* We wish it to be understood, that the necessities of our story alone have made the Wolves the assailants. While endeavoring to paint the evils arising from the abuse of the spirit of association, we do not wish to ascribe a character of savage hostility to one sect rather than to the other—to the Wolves more than to the Devourers. The Wolves, a club of united stone-cutters, are generally industrious, intelligent workmen, whose situation is the more worthy of interest, as not only their labors, conducted with mathematical precision, are of the rudest and most wearisome kind, but they are likewise out of work during three or four months of the year, their profession being, unfortunately, one of those which the winter condemns to a forced cessation. A number of Wolves, in order to perfect themselves in their trade, attend every evening a course of linear geometry, applied to the cutting of stone, analogous to that given by M. Agricole Perdignier, for the benefit of carpenters. Several working stone-cutters sent an architectural model in plaster to the last exhibition.

the mania of destruction, broke without remorse machines of the greatest value, and most delicate construction; half-manufactured articles were pitilessly destroyed; a savage emulation seemed to inspire these barbarians, and those workshops, so lately the model of order and well-regulated economy, were soon nothing but a wreck; the courts were strewed with fragments of all kinds of wares, which were thrown from the windows with ferocious outcries, or savage bursts of laughter. Then, still thanks to the incitements of the little man with the ferret's face, the books of M. Hardy, archives of commercial industry, so indispensable to the trader, were scattered to the wind, torn, trampled under foot, in a sort of infernal dance, composed of all that was most impure in this assembly of low, filthy, and ragged men and women, who held each other by the hand, and whirled round and round with horrible clamor. Strange and painful contrast! At the height of the stunning noise of these horrid deeds of tumult and devastation, a scene of imposing and mournful calm was taking place in the chamber of Marshal Simon's father, the door of which was guarded by a few devoted men. The old workman was stretched on his bed, with a bandage across his blood-stained white hair. His countenance was livid, his breathing oppressed, his look fixed and glazed.

Marshal Simon, standing at the head of the bed, bending over his father, watched in despairing anguish the least sign of consciousness on the part of the dying man, near whom was a physician, with his finger on the failing pulse. Rose and Blanche, brought hither by Dagobert, were kneeling beside the bed, their hands clasped, and their eyes bathed in tears; a little further, half hidden in the shadows of the room, for the hours had passed quickly, and the night was at hand, stood Dagobert himself, with his arms crossed upon his breast, and his features painfully contracted. A profound and solemn silence reigned in this chamber, only interrupted by the broken sobs of Rose and Blanche, or by Father Simon's hard breathing. The eyes of the marshal were dry, gloomy, and full of fire. He only withdrew them from his father's face, to interrogate the physician by a look. There are strange coincidences in life. That physician was Dr. Baleinier. The asylum of the doctor being close to the barrier that was nearest to the factory, and his fame being widely spread in the neighborhood, they had run to fetch him on the first call for medical assistance.

Suddenly, Dr. Baleinier made a movement; the marshal,

who had not taken his eyes off him, exclaimed: "Is there any hope?"

"At least, my lord duke, the pulse revives a little."

"He is saved!" said the marshal.

"Do not cherish false hopes, my lord duke," answered the doctor, gravely: "the pulse revives, owing to the powerful applications to the feet, but I know not what will be the issue of the crisis."

"Father! father! do you hear me?" cried the marshal seeing the old man slightly move his head, and feebly raise his eyelids. He soon opened his eyes, and this time their intelligence had returned.

"Father! you live—you know me!" cried the marshal, giddy with joy and hope.

"Pierre! are you there?" said the old man, in a weak voice. "Your hand—give it——" and he made a feeble movement.

"Here, father!" cried the marshal, as he pressed the hand of the old man in his own.

Then, yielding to an impulse of delight, he bent over his father, covered his hands, face, and hair with kisses, and repeated: "He lives! kind heaven, he lives! he is saved!"

At this instant, the noise of the struggle which had recommenced between the rabble, the Wolves, and the Devourers, reached the ears of the dying man.

"That noise! that noise!" said he: "they are fighting."

"It is growing less, I think," said the marshal, in order not to agitate his father.

"Pierre," said the old man, in a weak and broken voice. "I have not long to live."

"Father——"

"Let me speak, child; if I can but tell you all."

"Sir," said Baleinier piously to the old workman, "heaven may perhaps work a miracle in your favor; show yourself grateful, and allow a priest——"

"A priest! Thank you, sir—I have my son," said the old man; "in his arms, I will render up my soul—which has always been true and honest."

"You die?" exclaimed the marshal; "no! no!"

"Pierre," said the old man, in a voice which, firm at first, gradually grew fainter, "just now—you asked my advice—in a very serious matter. I think, that the wish to tell you of your duty—has recalled me—for a moment—to life—for I should die miserable—if I thought you in a road unworthy of yourself and me. Listen to me, my son—my noble son—

at this last hour, a father cannot deceive himself. You have a great duty to perform—under pain—of not acting like a man of honor—under pain of neglecting my last will. You ought, without hesitation——"

Here the voice failed the old man. When he had pronounced the last sentence, he became quite unintelligible. The only words that Marshal Simon could distinguish, were these: "Napoleon II.—oath—dishonor—my son!"

Then the old workman again moved his lips mechanically—and all was over. At the moment he expired, the night was quite come, and terrible shouts were heard from without, of "Fire! Fire!" The conflagration had broken out in one of the workshops, filled with inflammable stuff, into which had glided the little man with the ferret's face. At the same time, the roll of drums was heard in the distance, announcing the arrival of a detachment of troops from town.

* * * * * * *

During an hour, in spite of every effort, the fire had been spreading through the factory. The night is clear, cold, starlight; the wind blows keenly from the north, with a moaning sound. A man, walking across the fields, where the rising ground conceals the fire from him, advances with slow and unsteady steps. It is M. Hardy. He had chosen to return home on foot, across the country, hoping that a walk would calm the fever in his blood—an icy fever, more like the chill of death. He had not been deceived. His adored mistress—the noble woman, with whom he might have found refuge from the consequences of the fearful deception which had just been revealed to him—had quitted France. He could have no doubt of it. Margaret was gone to America. Her mother had exacted from her, in expiation of her fault, that she should not even write to him one word of farewell—to him, for whom she had sacrificed her duty as a wife. Margaret had obeyed.

Besides, she had often said to him: "Between my mother and you, I should not hesitate."

She had not hesitated. There was therefore no hope, not the slightest; even if an ocean had not separated him from Margaret, he knew enough of her blind submission to her mother, to be certain that all relations between them were broken off forever. It is well. He will no longer reckon upon this heart—his last refuge. The two roots of his life have been torn up and broken, with the same blow, the same

day, almost at the same moment. What then remains for thee, poor sensitive plant, as thy tender mother used to call thee? What remains to console thee for the loss of this last love—this last friendship, so infamously crushed? Oh! there remains for thee that one corner of the earth, created after the image of thy mind—that little colony, so peaceful and flourishing, where, thanks to thee, labor brings with it joy and recompense. Those worthy artisans, whom thou hast made happy, good, and grateful, will not fail thee. That also is a great and holy affection; let it be thy shelter in the midst of this frightful wreck of all thy most sacred convictions! The calm of that cheerful and pleasant retreat, the sight of the unequalled happiness of thy dependents, will soothe thy poor, suffering soul, which now seems to live only for suffering. Come! you will soon reach the top of the hill, from which you can see afar, in the plain below, that paradise of workmen, of which you are the presiding divinity.

M. Hardy had reached the summit of the hill. At that moment the conflagration, repressed for a short time, burst forth with redoubled fury from the Common Dwelling-house, which it had now reached. A bright streak, at first white, then red, then copper-colored, illuminated the distant horizon. M. Hardy looked at it with a sort of incredulous, almost idiotic stupor. Suddenly, an immense column of flame shot up in the thick of a cloud of smoke, accompanied by a shower of sparks, and streamed towards the sky, casting a bright reflection over all the country, even to M. Hardy's feet. The violence of the north wind, driving the flames in waves before it, soon brought to the ears of M. Hardy the hurried clanging of the alarm-bell of the burning factory.

CHAPTER VI.

THE GO-BETWEEN.

A few days have elapsed since the conflagration of M. Hardy's factory. The following scene takes place in the Rue Clovis, in the house where Rodin had lodged, and which was still inhabited by Rose-Pompon, who, without the least scruple, availed herself of the household arrangements of her friend Philemon. It was about noon, and Rose-Pompon, alone in the chamber of the student, who was still absent, was breakfasting very gayly by the fireside; but how sin-

gular a breakfast! what a queer fire! how strange an apartment!

Imagine a large room, lighted by two windows without curtains—for as they looked on empty space, the lodger had no fear of being overlooked. One side of this apartment served as a wardrobe, for there was suspended Rose-Pompon's flashy costume of débardeur, not far from the boatman's jacket of Philemon, with his large trousers of coarse, gray stuff, covered with pitch (shiver my timbers!), just as if this intrepid mariner had bunked in the forecastle of a frigate, during a voyage round the globe. A gown of Rose-Pompon's hung gracefully over a pair of pantaloons, the legs of which seemed to come from beneath the petticoat. On the lowest of several book-shelves, very dusty and neglected, by the side of three old boots (wherefore *three* boots?) and a number of empty bottles, stood a skull, a scientific and friendly souvenir, left to Philemon by one of his comrades, a medical student. With a species of pleasantry, very much to the taste of the student-world, a clay pipe with a very black bowl was placed between the magnificently white teeth of this skull; moreover, its shining top was half hidden beneath an old hat, set knowingly on one side, and adorned with faded flowers and ribbons. When Philemon was drunk, he used to contemplate this bony emblem of mortality, and break out into the most poetical monologues, with regard to this philosophical contrast between death and the mad pleasures of life. Two or three plaster casts, with their noses and chins more or less injured, were fastened to the wall, and bore witness to the temporary curiosity which Philemon had felt with regard to phrenological science, from the patient and serious study of which he had drawn the following logical conclusion:—That, having to an alarming extent the bump of getting into debt, he ought to resign himself to the fatality of this organization, and accept the inconvenience of creditors as a vital necessity. On the chimney-piece, stood uninjured, in all its majesty, the magnificent rowing-club drinking-glass, a china teapot without a spout, and an inkstand of black wood, the glass mouth of which was covered by a coat of greenish and mossy mould. From time to time, the silence of this retreat was interrupted by the cooing of pigeons, which Rose-Pompon had established with cordial hospitality in the little study. Chilly as a quail, Rose-Pompon crept close to the fire, and at the same time seemed to enjoy the warmth of a bright ray of sunshine, which enveloped her in its golden light. This droll little

creature was dressed in the oddest costume, which, however, displayed to advantage the freshness of her piquant and pretty countenance, crowned with its fine, fair hair, always neatly combed and arranged the first thing in the morning. By way of dressing-gown, Rose-Pompon had ingeniously drawn over her linen, the ample scarlet flannel shirt which belonged to Philemon's official garb in the rowing-club; the collar, open and turned down, displayed the whiteness of the young girl's under garment, as also of her neck and shoulders, on whose firm and polished surface the scarlet shirt seemed to cast a rosy light. The grisette's fresh and dimpled arms half protruded from the large, turned-up sleeves; and her charming legs were also half visible, crossed one over the other, and clothed in neat white stockings, and boots. A black silk cravat formed the girdle which fastened the shirt round the wasp-like waist of Rose-Pompon, just above those hips, worthy of the enthusiasm of a modern Phidias, and which gave to this style of dress a grace very original.

We have said, that the breakfast of Rose-Pompon was singular. You shall judge. On a little table placed before her, was a wash-hand-basin, into which she had recently plunged her fresh face, bathing it in pure water. From the bottom of this basin, now transformed into a salad-bowl, Rose-Pompon took with the tips of her fingers large green leaves, dripping with vinegar, and crunched them between her tiny white teeth, whose enamel was too hard to allow them to be set on edge. Her drink was a glass of water and syrup of gooseberries, which she stirred with a wooden mustard-spoon. Finally, as an extra dish, she had a dozen olives in one of those blue glass trinket-dishes sold for twenty-five sous. Her dessert was composed of nuts, which she prepared to roast on a red-hot shovel. That Rose-Pompon, with such an unaccountable savage choice of food, should retain a freshness of complexion worthy of her name, is one of those miracles, which reveal the mighty power of youth and health. When she had eaten her salad, Rose-Pompon was about to begin upon her olives, when a low knock was heard at the door, which was modestly bolted on the inside.

"Who is there?" said Rose-Pompon.

"A friend—the oldest of the old," replied a sonorous, jovial voice. "Why do you lock yourself in?"

"What! is it you, Ninny Moulin?"

"Yes, my beloved pupil. Open quickly. Time presses."

"Open to you? Oh, I dare say!—that would be pretty, the figure I am!"

"I believe you! what does it matter what figure you are? It would be very pretty, thou rosiest of all the roses with which Cupid ever adorned his quiver!"

"Go and preach fasting and morality in your journal, fat apostle!" said Rose-Pompon, as she restored the scarlet shirt to its place, with Philemon's other garments.

"I say! are we to talk much longer through the door, for the greater edification of our neighbors?" cried Ninny Moulin. "I have something of importance to tell you—something that will astonish you——"

"Give me time to put on my gown, great plague that you are!"

"If it is because of my modesty, do not think of it. I am not over nice. I should like you very well as you are!"

"Only to think that such a monster is the favorite of all the churchgoers!" said Rose-Pompon, opening the door as she finished fastening her dress.

"So! you have at last returned to the dovecot, you stray bird!" said Ninny Moulin, folding his arms, and looking at Rose-Pompon with comic seriousness. "And where may you have been, I pray? For three days the naughty little bird has left its nest."

"True; I only returned home last night. You must have called during my absence?"

"I came every day, and even twice a day, young lady, for I have very serious matters to communicate."

"Very serious matters? Then we shall have a good laugh at them."

"Not at all—they are really serious," said Ninny Moulin, seating himself. "But, first of all, what did you do during the three days that you left your conjugal and Philemonic home? I must know all about it, before I tell you more."

"Will you have some olives?" said Rose-Pompon, as she nibbled one of them herself.

"Is that your answer?—I understand!—Unfortunate Philemon!"

"There is no unfortunate Philemon in the case, slanderer. Clara had a death in her house, and, for the first few days after the funeral she was afraid to sleep alone."

"I thought Clara sufficiently provided against such fears."

"There you are deceived, you great viper! I was obliged to go and keep the poor girl company."

At this assertion, the religious pamphleteer hummed a tune, with an incredulous and mocking air.

"You think I have played Philemon tricks?" cried Rose-Pompon, cracking a nut with the indignation of injured innocence.

"I do not say tricks; but one little rose-colored trick."

"I tell you, that it was not for my pleasure I went out. On the contrary—for, during my absence, poor Cephyse disappeared."

"Yes, Mother Arsène told me that the Bacchanal-Queen was gone on a journey. But when I talk of Philemon, you talk of Cephyse; we don't progress."

"May I be eaten by the black panther that they are showing at the Porte-Saint-Martin if I do not tell you the truth. And, talking of that, you must get tickets to take me to see those animals, my little Ninny Moulin! They tell me there never were such darling wild beasts."

"Now really, are you mad?"

"Why so?"

"That I should guide your youth, like a venerable patriarch, through the dangers of the *Storm-blown Tulip*, all well and good—I ran no risk of meeting my pastors and masters; but were I to take you to a Lent-Spectacle (since there are only beasts to be seen), I might just run against my sacristans—and how pretty I should look with you on my arm!"

"You can put on a false nose, and straps to your trousers, my big Ninny; they will never know you."

"We must not think of false noses, but of what I have to tell you, since you assure me that you have no intrigue in hand."

"I swear it!" said Rose-Pompon, solemnly, extending her left hand horizontally, whilst with her right she put a nut into her mouth. Then she added, with surprise, as she looked at the outside coat of Ninny Moulin, "Goodness gracious! what full pockets you have got! What is there in them?"

"Something that concerns you, Rose-Pompon," said Dumoulin, gravely.

"Me?"

"Rose-Pompon!" said Ninny Moulin, suddenly, with a majestic air; "will you have a carriage? Will you inhabit a charming apartment, instead of living in this dreadful hole? Will you be dressed like a duchess?"

"Now for some more nonsense! Come, will you eat the olives? If not, I shall eat them all up. There is only one left."

Without answering this gastronomic offer, Ninny Moulin

felt in one of his pockets, and drew from it a case containing a very pretty bracelet, which he held up sparkling before the eyes of the young girl.

"Oh! what a sumptuous bracelet!" cried she, clapping her hands. "A green-eyed serpent biting his tail—the emblem of my love for Philemon."

"Do not talk of Philemon; it annoys me," said Ninny Moulin, as he clasped the bracelet round the wrist of Rose-Pompon, who allowed him to do it, laughing all the while like mad, and saying to him, "So you've been employed to make a purchase, big apostle, and you wish to see the effect of it. Well! it is charming!"

"Rose-Pompon," resumed Ninny Moulin, "would you like to have a servant, a box at the Opera, and a thousand francs a month for your pin-money?"

"Always the same nonsense. Get along!" said the young girl, as she held up the bracelet to the light, still continuing to eat her nuts. "Why always the same farce, and no change of bills?"

Ninny Moulin again plunged his hand into his pocket, and this time drew forth an elegant chain, which he hung round Rose-Pompon's neck.

"Oh! what a beautiful chain!" cried the young girl, as she looked by turns at the sparkling ornament and the religious writer. "If you chose that also, you have a very good taste. But am I not a good-natured girl to be your *dummy*, just to show off your jewels?"

"Rose-Pompon," returned Ninny Moulin, with a still more majestic air, "these trifles are nothing to what you may obtain, if you will but follow the advice of your old friend."

Rose began to look at Dumoulin with surprise, and said to him, "What does all this mean, Ninny Moulin? Explain yourself; what advice have you to give?"

Dumoulin did not answer, but replunging his hand into his inexhaustible pocket, he fished up a parcel, which he carefully unfolded, and in which was a magnificent mantilla of black lace. Rose-Pompon started up, full of new admiration, and Dumoulin threw the rich mantilla over the young girl's shoulders.

"It is superb! I have never seen anything like it! What patterns! what work!" said Rose-Pompon, as she examined all with simple and perfectly disinterested curiosity. Then she added, "Your pocket is like a shop; where did you get all these pretty things?" Then, bursting into a fit of laughter, which brought the blood to her cheeks,

she exclaimed, "Oh, I have it! These are the wedding presents for Madame de la Sainte-Colombe. I congratulate you; they are very choice."

"And where do you suppose I should find money to buy these wonders?" said Ninny Moulin. "I repeat to you, all this is yours if you will but listen to me!"

"How is this?" said Rose-Pompon, with the utmost amazement; "is what you tell me in downright earnest?"

"In downright earnest."

"This offer to make me a great lady?"

"The jewels might convince you of the reality of my offers."

"And you propose all this to me for some one else, my poor Ninny Moulin?"

"One moment," said the religious writer, with a comical air of modesty, "you must know me well enough, my beloved pupil, to feel certain that I should be incapable of inducing you to commit an improper action. I respect myself too much for that—leaving out the consideration that it would be unfair to Philemon, who confided to me the guardianship of your virtue."

"Then, Ninny Moulin," said Rose-Pompon, more and more astonished, "on my word of honor, I can make nothing of it."

"Yet, 'tis all very simple, and I——"

"Oh! I've found it," cried Rose-Pompon, interrupting Ninny Moulin; "it is some gentleman who offers me his hand, his heart, and all the rest of it. Could you not tell me that directly?"

"A marriage? oh, laws, yes!" said Dumoulin, shrugging his shoulders.

"What! is it not a marriage?" said Rose-Pompon, again much surprised.

"No."

"And the offers you make me are honest ones, my big apostle?"

"They could not be more so." Here Dumoulin spoke the truth.

"I shall not have to be unfaithful to Philemon?"

"No."

"Or faithful to any one else?"

"No."

Rose-Pompon looked confounded. Then she rattled on: "Come, do not let us have any joking! I am not foolish enough to imagine that I am to live just like a duchess, just

for nothing. What, therefore, must I give in return?"

"Nothing at all."

"Nothing?"

"Not even that," said Ninny Moulin, biting his nail-tip.

"But what am I to do, then?"

"Dress yourself as handsomly as possible, take your ease, amuse yourself, ride about in a carriage. You see, it is not very fatiguing—and you will, moreover, help to do a good action."

"What! by living like a duchess?"

"Yes! so make up your mind. Do not ask me for any more details, for I cannot give them to you. For the rest, you will not be detained against your will. Just try the life I propose to you. If it suits you, go on with it; if not, return to your Philemonic household."

"In fact——"

"Only try it. What can you risk?"

"Nothing; but I can hardly believe that all you say is true. And then," added she, with hesitation, "I do not know if I ought——"

Ninny Moulin went to the window, opened it, and said to Rose-Pompon, who ran up to it, "Look there! before the door of the house."

"What a pretty carriage! How comfortable a body'd be inside of it!"

"That carriage is yours. It is waiting for you."

"Waiting for me!" exclaimed Rose-Pompon; "am I to decide as short as that?"

"Or not at all."

"To-day?"

"On the instant."

"But where will they take me?"

"How should I know?"

"You do not know where they will take me?"

"Not I,"—and Dumoulin still spoke the truth—"the coachman has his orders."

"Do you know all this is very funny, Ninny Moulin?"

"I believe you. If it were not funny, where would be the pleasure?"

"You are right."

"Then you accept the offer? That is well. I am delighted both for you and myself."

"For yourself?"

"Yes; because, in accepting, you render me a great service."

"You? How so?"

"It matters little, as long as I feel obliged to you."

"True."

"Come, then; let us set out!"

"Bah! after all, they cannot eat me," said Rose-Pompon, resolutely.

With a skip and a jump, she went to fetch a rose-colored cap, and, going up to a broken looking-glass, placed the cap very much cocked on one side on her bands of light hair. This left uncovered her snowy neck, with the silky roots of the hair behind, and gave to her pretty face a very mischievous, not to say licentious expression.

"My cloak!" said she to Ninny Moulin, who seemed to be relieved from a considerable amount of uneasiness, since she had accepted his offer.

"Fie! a cloak will not do," answered her companion, feeling once more in his pocket and drawing out a fine Cashmere shawl, which he threw over Rose-Pompon's shoulders.

"A Cashmere!" cried the young girl, trembling with pleasure and joyous surprise. Then she added, with an air of heroism: "It is settled! I will run the gauntlet." And with a light step she descended the stairs, followed by Ninny Moulin.

The worthy greengrocer was at her post. "Good-morning, mademoiselle; you are early to-day," said she to the young girl.

"Yes, Mother Arsène; there is my key."

"Thank you, mademoiselle."

"Oh! now I think of it," said Rose Pompon, suddenly, in a whisper, as she turned towards Ninny Moulin, and withdrew further from the portress, "what is to become of Philemon?"

"Philemon?"

"If he should arrive——"

"Oh! the devil!" said Ninny Moulin, scratching his ear.

"Yes; if Philemon should arrive, what will they say to him? for I may be a long time absent."

"Three or four months, I suppose."

"Not more?"

"I should think not."

"Oh! very good!" said Rose-Pompon. Then, turning towards the greengrocer, she said to her, after a moment's reflection: "Mother Arsène, if Philemon should come home, you will tell him I have gone out—on business."

"Yes, mademoiselle."

"And that he must not forget to feed my pigeons, which are in his study."

"Yes, mademoiselle."

"Good-bye, Mother Arsène."

"Good bye, mademoiselle." And Rose-Pompon entered the carriage in triumph, along with Ninny Moulin.

"The devil take me if I know what is to come of all this," said Jacques Dumoulin to himself, as the carriage drove rapidly down the Rue Clovis. "I have repaired my error—and now I laugh at the rest."

CHAPTER VII.

ANOTHER SECRET.

The following scene took place a few days after the abduction of Rose-Pompon by Ninny Moulin. Mdlle. de Cardoville was seated in a dreamy mood, in her cabinet, which was hung with green silk, and furnished with an ebony library, ornamented with large bronze caryatides. By some significant signs, one could perceive that Mdlle. de Cardoville had sought in the fine airs some relief from sad and serious thoughts. Near an open piano, was a harp, placed before a music-stand. A little further, on a table covered with boxes of oil and water-color, were several brilliant sketches. Most of them represented Asiatic scenes, lighted by the fires of an oriental sun. Faithful to her fancy of dressing herself at home in a picturesque style, Mademoiselle de Cardoville resembled that day one of those proud portraits of Velasquez, with stern and noble aspect. Her gown was of black moire, with wide-swelling petticoat, long waist, and sleeve slashed with rose-colored satin, fastened together with jet bugles. A very stiff, Spanish ruff reached almost to her chin, and was secured round her neck by a broad rose-colored ribbon. This frill, slightly heaving, sloped down as far as the graceful swell of the rose-colored stomacher, laced with strings of jet beads, and terminating in a point at the waist. It is impossible to express how well this black garment, with its ample and shining folds, relieved with rose-color and brilliant jet, harmonized with the shining whiteness of Adrienne's skin, and the golden flood of her beautiful hair, whose long, silky ringlets descended to her bosom.

The young lady was in a half-recumbent posture, with her elbow resting on a couch covered with green silk. The back of this piece of furniture, which was pretty high towards the fireplace, sloped down insensibly towards the foot. A sort of light, semicircular trellis-work, in gilded bronze, raised about five feet from the ground, covered with flowering plants (the admirable *passiflores quadrangulatæ*, planted in a deep ebony box, from the centre of which rose the trellis-work), surrounded this couch with a sort of screen of foliage enamelled with large flowers, green without, purple within, and as brilliant as those flowers of porcelain, which we receive from Saxony. A sweet, faint perfume, like a faint mixture of jasmine with violet, rose from the cup of these admirable *passiflores*. Strange enough, a large quantity of new books (Adrienne having bought them since the last two or three days), and quite fresh-cut, were scattered around her on the couch, and on a little table; whilst other larger volumes, amongst which were several atlases full of engravings, were piled on the sumptuous fur, which formed the carpet beneath the divan. Stranger still, these books, though of different forms, and by different authors, all treated of the same subject. The posture of Adrienne revealed a sort of melancholy dejection. Her cheeks were pale; a light blue circle surrounded her large, black eyes, now half-closed, and gave to them an expression of profound grief. Many causes contributed to this sorrow—amongst others, the disappearance of Mother Bunch. Without absolutely believing the perfidious insinuations of Rodin, who gave her to understand that, in the fear of being unmasked by him, the hunchback had not dared to remain in the house, Adrienne felt a cruel sinking of the heart, when she thought how this young girl, in whom she had had so much confidence, had fled from her almost sisterly hospitality, without even uttering a word of gratitude; for care had been taken not to show her the few lines written by the poor needlewoman to her benefactress, just before her departure. She had only been told of the note for five hundred francs found on her desk; and this last inexplicable circumstance had contributed to awaken cruel suspicions in the breast of Mdlle. de Cardoville. She already felt the fatal effects of that mistrust of everything and everybody, which Rodin had recommended to her; and this sentiment of suspicion and reserve had the more tendency to become powerful, that, for the first time in her life, Mdlle. de Cardoville, until then a stranger to all decep

tion, had a secret to conceal—a secret, which was equally her happiness, her shame, and her torment.

Half-recumbent on her divan, pensive and depressed, Adrienne pursued, with a mind often absent, one of her newly purchased books. Suddenly, she uttered an exclamation of surprise; the hand which held the book trembled like a leaf, and from that moment she appeared to read with passionate attention and devouring curiosity. Soon, her eyes sparkled with enthusiasm, her smile assumed ineffable sweetness, and she seemed at once proud, happy, delighted —but, as she turned over the last page, her countenance expressed disappointment and chagrin. Then she recommenced this reading, which had occasioned her such sweet emotion, and this time she read with the most deliberate slowness, going over each page twice, and spelling, as it were, every line, every word. From time to time, she paused, and in a pensive mood, with her forehead leaning on her fair hand, she seemed to reflect, in a deep reverie, on the passages she had read with such tender and religious love. Arriving at a passage which so affected her, that a tear started in her eye, she suddenly turned the volume, to see on the cover the name of the author. For a few seconds, she contemplated this name with a singular expression of gratitude, and could not forbear raising to her rosy lips the page on which it was printed. After reading many times over the lines with which she had been so much struck, forgetting, no doubt, the letter in the spirit, she began to reflect so deeply, that the book glided from her hand, and fell upon the carpet. During the course of this reverie, the eyes of the young girl rested, at first mechanically, upon an admirable bas-relief, placed on an ebony stand, near one of the windows. This magnificent bronze, recently cast after a plaster copy from the antique, represented the triumph of the Indian Bacchus. Never, perhaps, had Grecian art attained such rare perfection. The youthful conqueror, half-clad in a lion's skin, which displayed his juvenile grace and charming purity of form, shone with divine beauty. Standing up in a car, drawn by two tigers, with an air at once gentle and proud, he leaned with one hand upon a thyrsus, and with the other guided his savage steeds in tranquil majesty. By this rare mixture of grace, vigor, and serenity, it was easy to recognize the hero who had waged such desperate combats with men and with monsters of the forest. Thanks to the brownish tone of the figure, the light, falling from one side of the sculpture,

admirably displayed the form of the youthful god, which, carved in relievo, and thus illumined, shone like a magnificent statue of pale gold upon the dark fretted background of the bronze.

When Adrienne's look first rested on this rare assemblage of divine perfections, her countenance was calm and thoughtful. But this contemplation, at first mechanical, became gradually more and more attentive and conscious, and the young lady, rising suddenly from her seat, slowly approached the bas-relief, as if yielding to the invincible attraction of an extraordinary resemblance. Then a slight blush appeared on the cheeks of Mdlle. de Cardoville, stole across her face, and spread rapidly to her neck and forehead. She approached still closer, threw round a hasty glance, as if half-ashamed, or as if she had feared to be surprised in a blamable action, and twice stretched forth her hand, trembling with emotion, to touch with the tips of her charming fingers the bronze forehead of the Indian Bacchus. And twice she stopped short, with a kind of modest hesitation. At last, the temptation became too strong for her. She yielded to it; and her alabaster finger, after delicately caressing the features of pale gold, was pressed more boldly for an instant on the pure and noble brow of the youthful god. At this pressure, though so slight, Adrienne seemed to feel a sort of electric shock; she trembled in every limb, her eyes languished, and, after swimming for an instant in their humid and brilliant crystal, were raised, half-closed, to heaven. Then her head was thrown a little way back, her knees bent insensibly, her rosy lips were half opened, as if to give a passage to her heated breath, for her bosom heaved violently, as though youth and life had accelerated the pulsations of her heart, and made her blood boil in her veins. Finally, the burning cheeks of Adrienne betrayed a species of ecstasy, timid and passionate, chaste and sensual, the expression of which was ineffably touching.

An affecting spectacle indeed is that of a young maiden, whose modest brow flushes with the first fires of a secret passion. Does not the Creator of all things animate the body as well as the soul, with a spark of divine energy? Should He not be religiously glorified in the intellect as in the senses, with which He has so paternally endowed His creatures? They are impious blasphemers who seek to stifle the celestial senses, instead of guiding and harmonizing them in their divine flight. Suddenly, Mdlle. de Cardoville started, raised her head, opened her eyes as if awaking from a dream,

withdrew abruptly from the sculptures, and walked several times up and down the room in an agitated manner, pressing her burning hands to her forehead. Then, falling, as it were, exhausted on her seat, her tears flowed in abundance. The most bitter grief was visible in her features, which revealed the fatal struggle that was passing within her. By degrees, her tears ceased. To this crisis of painful dejection succeeded a species of violent scorn and indignation against herself, which were expressed by these words that escaped her: "For the first time in my life, I feel weak and cowardly. Oh yes! cowardly—very cowardly!"

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The sound of a door opening and closing, roused Mdlle. de Cardoville from her bitter reflections. Georgette entered the room, and said to her mistress: "Madame, can you receive the Count de Montbron?"

Adrienne, too well-bred to exhibit before her women the sort of impatience occasioned by this unseasonable visit, said to Georgette: "You told M. de Montbron that I was at home?"

"Yes, Madame."

"Then beg him to walk in." Though Mdlle. de Cardoville felt at that moment much vexed at the arrival of Montbron, let us hasten to say, that she entertained for him an almost filial affection, and a profound esteem, though, by a not unfrequent contrast, she almost always differed from him in opinion. Hence arose, when Mdlle. de Cardoville had nothing to disturb her mind, the most gay and animated discussions, in which M. de Montbron, notwithstanding his mocking and sceptical humor, his long experience, his rare knowledge of men and things, his fashionable training, in a word, had not always the advantage, and even acknowledged his defeat gayly enough. Thus, to give an idea of the differences of the count and Adrienne, before, as he would say laughingly, he had made himself her accomplice, he had always opposed (from other motives than those alleged by Madame de Saint-Dizier) Adrienne's wish to live alone and in her own way; whilst Rodin, on the contrary, by investing the young girl's resolve on this subject with an ideal grandeur of intention, had acquired a species of influence over her. M. de Montbron, now upwards of sixty years of age, had been a most prominent character during the Directory, Consulate, and the Empire. His prodigal style of living, his wit, his gayety, his duels, his amours, and his losses at play, had given him a leading influence in the best society

of his day; while his character, his kind-heartedness, and liberality, secured him the lasting friendship of nearly all his female friends. At the time we now present him to the reader, he was still a great gambler; and, moreover, a very lucky gambler. He had, as we have stated, a very lordly style; his manners were decided, but polished and lively; his habits were such as belong to the higher classes of society, though he could be excessively sharp towards people whom he did not like. He was tall and thin, and his slim figure gave him an almost youthful appearance; his forehead was high, and a little bald; his hair was gray and short, his countenance long, his nose aquiline, his eyes blue and piercing, and his teeth white, and still very good.

"The Count de Montbron," said Georgette, opening the door. The count entered, and hastened to kiss Adrienne's hand, with a sort of paternal familiarity.

"Come!" said M. de Montbron to himself; "let us try to discover the truth I am in search of, that we may escape a great misfortune."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE CONFESSION.

Mdlle. de Cardoville, not wishing to betray the cause of the violent feelings which agitated her, received M. de Montbron with a feigned and forced gayety. On the other hand, notwithstanding his tact and knowledge of the world, the count was much embarrassed how to enter upon the subject on which he wished to confer with Adrienne, and he resolved to feel his way, before seriously commencing the conversation. After looking at the young lady for some seconds, M. de Montbron shook his head, and said, with a sigh of regret; "My dear child, I am not pleased."

"Some affair of the heart, or of *hearts*, my dear count?" returned Adrienne, smiling.

"Of the heart," said M. de Montbron.

"What! you, so great a player, think more of a woman's whim than a throw of the dice?"

"I have a heavy heart, and you are the cause of it, my dear child."

"M. de Montbron, you will make me very proud," said Adrienne, with a smile.

"You would be wrong, for I tell you plainly, my trouble

is caused by your neglect of your beauty. Yes, your countenance is pale, dejected, sorrowful; you have been low-spirited for the last few days; you have something on your mind, I am sure of it."

"My dear M. de Montbron, you have so much penetration, that you may be allowed to fail for once, as now. I am not sad, I have nothing on my mind, and—I am about to utter a very silly piece of impertinence—I have never thought myself so pretty."

"On the contrary, nothing could be more modest than such an assertion. Who told you that falsehood? a woman?"

"No; it was my heart, and it spoke the truth," answered Adrienne, with a slight degree of emotion. "Understand it, if you can," she added.

"Do you mean that you are proud of the alteration in your features, because you are proud of the sufferings of your heart?" said M. de Montbron, looking at Adrienne with attention. "Be it so; I am then right. You have some sorrow. I persist in it," added the count, speaking with a tone of real feeling, "because it is painful to me."

"Be satisfied; I am as happy as possible—for every instant I take delight in repeating, how, at my age, I am free—absolutely free!"

"Yes; free to torment yourself, free to be miserable."

"Come, come, my dear count!" said Adrienne, "you are recommencing our old quarrel. I still find in you the ally of my aunt and the Abbé d'Aigrigny."

"Yes; as the republicans are the allies of the legitimists—to destroy each other in their turn. Talking of your abominable aunt, they say that she holds a sort of council at her house these last few days, a regular mitred conspiracy. She is certainly in a good way."

"Why not? Formerly, she would have wished to be Goddess of Reason, now, we shall perhaps see her canonized. She has already performed the first part of the life of Mary Magdalen."

"You can never speak worse of her than she deserves, my dear child. Still, though for quite opposite reasons, I agreed with her on the subject of your wish to reside alone."

"I know it."

"Yes; and because I wished to see you a thousand times freer than you really are, I advised you——"

"To marry."

"No doubt; you would have had your dear liberty, with

its consequences, only, instead of Mdlle. de Cardoville, we should have called you Madame Somebody, having found an excellent husband to be responsible for your independence."

"And who would have been responsible for this ridiculous husband? And who would bear a mocked and degraded name? I, perhaps?" said Adrienne, with animation. "No, no, my dear count, good or ill, I will answer for my own actions; to my name shall attach the reputation, which I alone have formed. I am as incapable of basely dishonoring a name which is not mine, as of continually bearing it myself, if it were not held in esteem. And, as one can only answer for one's own actions, I prefer to keep my name."

"You are the only person in the world that has such ideas."

"Why?" said Adrienne, laughing. "Because it appears to me horrible, to see a poor young girl lost and buried in some ugly and selfish man, and become, as they say seriously, the better half of the monster—yes! a fresh and blooming rose to become part of a frightful thistle!—Come, my dear count; confess there is something odious in this conjugal metempsychosis," added Adrienne, with a burst of laughter.

The forced and somewhat feverish gayety of Adrienne contrasted painfully with her pale and suffering countenance; it was so easy to see that she strove to stifle with laughter some deep sorrow, that M. de Montbron was much affected by it; but, dissembling his emotion, he appeared to reflect a moment, and took up mechanically one of the new, fresh-cut books, by which Adrienne was surrounded. After casting a careless glance at this volume, he continued, still dissembling his feelings: "Come, my dear madcap: this is another folly. Suppose I were twenty years old, and that you did me the honor to marry me—you would be called Lady de Montbron, I imagine?"

"Perhaps."

"How perhaps? Would you not bear my name, if you married me?"

"My dear count," said Adrienne, with a smile, "do not let us pursue this hypothesis, which can only leave us—regrets."

Suddenly, M. de Montbron started, and looked at Mdlle. de Cardoville with an expression of surprise. For some moments, whilst talking to Adrienne, he had mechanically taken up two or three of the volumes scattered over the couch, and had glanced at their titles in the same careless manner. The first was the "Modern History of India." The second, "Travels in India." The third, "Letters on

India." Much surprised, M. de Montbron had continued his investigation, and found that the fourth volume continued this Indian nomenclature, being "Rambles in India." The fifth was, "Recollections of Hindostan." The sixth, "Notes of a Traveller in the East Indies."

Hence the astonishment, which, for many serious reasons, M. de Montbron had no longer been able to conceal, and which his looks betrayed to Adrienne. The latter, having completely forgotten the presence of the accusing volumes by which she was surrounded, yielded to a movement of involuntary confusion, and blushed slightly; but, her firm and resolute character again coming to her aid, she looked full at M. de Montbron, and said to him: "Well, my dear count! what surprises you?"

Instead of answering, M. de Montbron appeared still more absorbed in thought, and contemplating the young girl, he could not forbear saying to himself: "No, no—it is impossible—and yet——"

"It would, perhaps, be indiscreet in me to listen to your soliloquy, my dear count," said Adrienne.

"Excuse me, my dear child; but what I see surprises me so much——"

"And pray what do you see?"

"The traces of so great and novel an interest in all that relates to India," said M. de Montbron, laying a slight stress on his words, and fixing a piercing look upon the young girl.

"Well!" said Adrienne, stoutly.

"Well! I seek the cause of this sudden passion——"

"Geographical?" said Mdlle. de Cardoville, interrupting M. de Montbron: "you may find this taste somewhat serious for my age, my dear count—but one must find occupation for leisure hours—and then, having a cousin, who is both an Indian and a prince, I should like to know something of the fortunate country from which I derive this savage relationship."

These last words were pronounced with a bitterness that was not lost on M. de Montbron: watching Adrienne attentively, he observed: "Meseems, you speak of the prince with some harshness."

"No; I speak of him with indifference."

"Yet he deserves a very different feeling."

"On the part of some other person, perhaps," replied Adrienne, dryly.

"He is so unhappy!" said M. de Montbron, in a tone of

sincere pity. "When I saw him the other day, he made my heart ache."

"What have I to do with it?" exclaimed Adrienne, with an accent of painful and almost angry impatience.

"I should have thought that his cruel torments at least deserved your pity," answered the count, gravely.

"Pity—from me!" cried Adrienne, with an air of offended pride. Then, restraining herself, she added coldly: "You are jesting, M. de Montbron. It is not in sober seriousness that you ask me to take interest in the amorous torments of your prince."

There was so much cold disdain in these last words of Adrienne, her pale and agitated countenance betrayed such haughty bitterness, that M. de Montbron said, sorrowfully: "It is then true; I have not been deceived. I, who thought, from our old and constant friendship, that I had some claim to your confidence, have known nothing of it—while you told all to another. It is painful, very painful to me."

"I do not understand you, M. de Montbron."

"Well then, since I must speak plainly," cried the count, "there is, I see, no hope for this unhappy boy—you love another."

As Adrienne started—"Oh! you cannot deny it," resumed the count; "your paleness and melancholy for the last few days, your implacable indifference to the prince—all prove to me that you are in love."

Hurt by the manner in which the count spoke of the sentiment he attributed to her, Mdlle. de Cardoville answered with dignified stateliness: "You must know, M. de Montbron that a secret discovered is not a confidence. Your language surprises me."

"Oh, my dear friend, if I use the poor privilege of experience—if I guess that you are in love—if I tell you so, and even go so far as to reproach you with it—it is because the life or death of this poor prince is concerned; and I feel for him as if he were my son, for it is impossible to know him without taking the warmest interest in him."

"It would be singular," returned Adrienne, with redoubled coldness, and still more bitter irony, "if my love—admitting I were in love—could have any such strange influence on Prince Djalma. What can it matter to him?" added she, with almost agonizing disdain.

"What can it matter to him? Now really, my dear friend, permit me to tell you, that it is you who are jesting

cruelly. What! this unfortunate youth loves you with all the blind ardor of a first love—twice has attempted to terminate by suicide the horrible tortures of his passion—and you think it strange that your love for another should be with him a question of life or death!"

"He loves me then?" cried the young girl, with an accent impossible to describe.

"He loves you to madness, I tell you; I have seen it."

Adrienne seemed overcome with amazement. From pale, she became crimson; as the redness disappeared, her lips grew white, and trembled. Her emotion was so strong, that she remained for some moments unable to speak, and pressed her hand to her heart, as if to moderate its pulsations.

M. de Montbron, almost frightened at the sudden change in Adrienne's countenance, hastily approached her, exclaiming: "Good heaven, my poor child! what is the matter?"

Instead of answering, Adrienne waved her hand to him, in sign that he should not be alarmed; and, in fact, the count was speedily tranquillized, for the beautiful face, which had so lately been contracted with pain, irony, and scorn, seemed now expressive of the sweetest and most ineffable emotions; Adrienne appeared to luxuriate in delight, and to fear losing the least particle of it; then, as reflection told her, that she was, perhaps, the dupe of illusion or falsehood, she exclaimed suddenly, with anguish, addressing herself to M. de Montbron: "But is what you tell me true?"

"What I tell you!"

"Yes—that Prince Djalma——"

"Loves you to madness?—Alas! it is only too true."

"No, no," cried Adrienne, with a charming expression of simplicity; "that could never be *too* true."

"What do you say?" cried the count.

"But that woman?" asked Adrienne, as if the word scorched her lips.

"What woman?"

"She who has been the cause of all these painful struggles."

"That woman!—why, who should it be but you?"

"What, I? Oh! tell me, was it I?"

"On my word of honor. I trust my experience. I have never seen so ardent and sincere a passion."

"Oh! is it really so? Has he never had any other love?"

"Never."

"Yet I was told so."

"By whom?"

"M. Rodin."

"That Djalma——"

"Had fallen violently in love, two days after I saw him."

"M. Rodin told you that!" cried M. de Montbron, as if struck with a sudden idea. "Why, it is he who told Djalma that you were in love with some one else."

"I!"

"And this it was which occasioned the poor youth's dreadful despair."

"It was this which occasioned *my* despair."

"You love him, then, just as he loves you!" exclaimed M. de Montbron, transported with joy.

"Love him!" said Mdlle. de Cardoville. A discreet knock at the door interrupted Adrienne.

"One of your servants, no doubt. Be calm," said the count.

"Come in," said Adrienne, in an agitated voice.

"What is it?" said Mdlle. de Cardoville. Florine entered the room.

"M. Rodin has just been here. Fearing to disturb mademoiselle, he would not come in; but he will return in half an hour. Will mademoiselle receive him?"

"Yes, yes," said the count to Florine; "even if I am still here, show him in by all means. Is not that your opinion?" asked M. de Montbron of Adrienne.

"Quite so," answered the young girl; and a flash of indignation darted from her eyes, as she thought of Rodin's perfidy.

"Oho! the old knave!" said M. de Montbron, "I always had my doubts of that crooked neck!" Florine withdrew, leaving the count with her mistress.

CHAPTER IX.

LOVE.

Mdlle. de Cardoville was transfigured. For the first time her beauty shone forth in all its lustre. Until now overshadowed by indifference, or darkened by grief, she appeared suddenly illumined by a brilliant ray of sunshine. The slight irritation caused by Rodin's perfidy passed like an imperceptible shade from her brow. What cared she now for falsehood and perfidy? Had they not failed? And,

for the future, what human power could interpose between her and Djalma, so sure of each other? Who would dare to cross the path of those two beings, resolute and strong with the irresistible power of youth, love, and liberty? Who would dare to follow them into that blazing sphere, whither they went, so beautiful and happy, to blend together in their inextinguishable love, protected by the proof-armor of their own happiness? Hardly had Florine left the room, when Adrienne approached M. de Montbron with a rapid step. She seemed to have become taller; and to watch her advancing, light, radiant, and triumphant, one might have fancied her a goddess walking upon clouds.

"When shall I see him?" was her first word to M. de Montbron.

"Well—say to-morrow; he must be prepared for so much happiness; in so ardent a nature, such sudden, unexpected joy might be terrible."

Adrienne remained pensive for a moment, and then said rapidly: "To-morrow—yes—not before to-morrow. I have a superstition of the heart."

"What is it?"

"You shall know. HE LOVES ME—that word says all, contains all, comprehends all, is all—and yet I have a thousand questions to ask with regard to him—but I will ask none before to-morrow, because, by a mysterious fatality, to-morrow is with me a sacred anniversary. It will be an age till then; but happily, I can wait. Look here!"

Beckoning M. de Montbron, she led him to the Indian Bacchus. "How much it is like him!" said she to the count.

"Indeed," exclaimed the latter, "it is strange!"

"Strange?" returned Adrienne, with a smile of gentle pride; "strange, that a hero, a demi-god, an ideal of beauty, should resemble Djalma?"

"How you love him!" said M. de Montbron, deeply touched, and almost dazzled by the felicity which beamed from the countenance of Adrienne.

"I must have suffered a good deal, do you not think so?" said she, after a moment's silence.

"If I had not made up my mind to come here to-day, almost in despair, what would have happened?"

"I cannot tell; I should perhaps have died, for I am wounded mortally here"—she pressed her hand to her heart. "But what might have been death to me, will now be life."

"It was horrible," said the count, shuddering. "Such a passion, buried in your own breast, proud as you are——"

"Yes, proud—but not self-conceited. When I learned his love for another, and that the impression which I fancied I had made on him at our first interview had been immediately effaced, I renounced all hope, without being able to renounce my love. Instead of shunning his image, I surrounded myself with all that could remind me of him. In default of happiness, there is a bitter pleasure in suffering through what we love."

"I can now understand your Indian library."

Instead of answering the count, Adrienne took from the stand one of the freshly-cut volumes, and, bringing it to M. de Montbron, said to him, with a smile and a celestial expression of joy and happiness: "I was wrong—I am vain. Just read this—aloud, if you please. I tell you that I can wait for to-morrow." Presenting the book to the count, she pointed out one passage with the tip of her charming finger. Then she sank down upon the couch, and, in an attitude of deep attention, with her body bent forward, her hands crossed upon the cushion, her chin resting upon her hands, her large eyes fixed with a sort of adoration on the Indian Bacchus, that was just opposite to her, she appeared by this impassioned contemplation to prepare herself to listen to M. de Montbron.

The latter, much astonished, began to read, after again looking at Adrienne, who said to him, in her most coaxing voice. "Very slowly, I beg of you."

M. de Montbron then read the following passage from the journal of a traveller in India: "'When I was at Bombay, in 1829, I constantly heard amongst the English there, of a young hero, the son of——'"

The count having paused a second, by reason of the barbarous spelling of the name of Djalma's father, Adrienne immediately said to him, in her soft voice: "The son of Kadja-sing."

"What a memory!" said the count, with a smile. And he resumed: "'A young hero, the son of Kadja-sing, king of Mundi. On his return from a distant and sanguinary expedition amongst the mountains against this Indian king, Colonel Drake was filled with enthusiasm for this son of Kadja-sing, known as Djalma. Hardly beyond the age of childhood, this young prince has, in the course of this implacable war given proofs of such chivalrous intrepidity, and of so noble a character, that his father has been surnamed the Father of the Generous.'"

"That is a touching custom," said the count. "To recom-

pense the father, as it were, by giving him a surname in honor of his son, is a great idea. But how strange you should have met with this book!" added the count, in surprise. "I can understand; there is matter here to inflame the coolest head."

"Oh! you will see, you will see," said Adrienne.

The count continued to read: "'Colonel Drake, one of the bravest and best officers of the English army, said yesterday, in my presence, that having been dangerously wounded, and taken prisoner by Prince Djalma, after an energetic resistance, he had been conveyed to the camp established in the village of——'"

Here there was the same hesitation on the part of the count, on seeing a still more barbarous name than the first; so, not wishing to try the adventure, he paused, and said to Adrienne, "Now really, I give this up."

"And yet it is so easy!" replied Adrienne; and she pronounced with inexpressible softness, a name in itself soft, "The village of Shumshabad."

"You appear to have an infallible process for remembering geographical names," said the count, continuing: "'Once arrived at the camp, Colonel Drake received the kindest hospitality, and Prince Djalma treated him with the respect of a son. It was there that the colonel became acquainted with some facts, which carried to the highest pitch his enthusiasm for Prince Djalma. I heard him relate the two following.

"'In one of the battles, the prince was accompanied by a young Indian of about twelve years of age, whom he loved tenderly, and who served him as a page, following him on horseback to carry his spare weapons. This child was idolized by its mother; just as they set out on the expedition, she had entrusted her son to Prince Djalma's care, saying, with a stoicism worthy of antiquity, "Let him be your brother." "He shall be my brother," had replied the prince. In the height of a disastrous defeat, the child is severely wounded, and his horse killed; the prince, at peril of his life, notwithstanding the perception of a forced retreat, disengages him, and places him on the croup of his own horse; they are pursued; a musket-ball strikes their steed, who is just able to reach a jungle, in the midst of which, after some vain efforts, he falls exhausted. The child is unable to walk, but the prince carries him in his arms, and hides with him in the thickest part of the jungle. The English arrive, and begin their search; but the two victims escape. After a

night and a day of marches, counter-marches, stratagems, fatigues, unheard-of perils, the prince, still carrying the child, one of whose legs is broken, arrives at his father's camp, and says, with the utmost simplicity, "I had promised his mother that I would act a brother's part by him—and I have done so."'

"That is admirable!" cried the count.

"Go on—pray go on!" said Adrienne, drying a tear, without removing her eyes from the bas-relief, which she continued to contemplate with growing adoration.

The count continued: "'Another time, Prince Djalma followed by two black slaves, went, before sunrise, to a very wild spot, to seize a couple of tiger cubs only a few days old. The den had been previously discovered. The two old tigers were still abroad. One of the blacks entered the den by a narrow aperture; the other, aided by Djalma, cut down a tolerably large tree, to prepare a trap for one of the old tigers. On the side of the aperture, the cavern was exceedingly steep. The prince mounted to the top of it with agility, to set his trap, with the aid of the other black. Suddenly, a dreadful roar was heard; and, in a few bounds, the tigress, returning from the chase, reached the opening of the den. The black who was laying the trap with the prince had his skull fractured by her bite; the tree, falling across the entrance, prevented the female from penetrating the cavern, and at the same time stopped the exit of the black who had seized the cubs.

"'About twenty feet higher, upon a ledge of rock, the prince lay flat on the ground, looking down upon this frightful spectacle. The tigress, rendered furious by the cries of her little ones, gnawed the hands of the black, who, from the interior of the den, strove to support the trunk of the tree, his only rampart, whilst he uttered the most lamentable outcries.'

"It is horrible!" said the count.

"Oh! go on! pray go on!" exclaimed Adrienne, with excitement; "you will see what can be achieved by the heroism of goodness."

The count pursued: "'Suddenly the prince seized his dagger between his teeth, fastened his sash to a block of stone, took his axe in one hand, and with the other slid down this substitute for a rope; falling a few steps from the wild beast, he sprang upon her, and, swift as lightning, dealt her two mortal strokes, just as the black, losing his strength,

was about to drop the trunk of the tree, sure to have been torn to pieces.' "

"And you are astonished at his resemblance with the demi-god, to whom fable itself ascribes no more generous devotion!" cried the young lady, with still increasing excitement.

"I am astonished no longer, I only admire," said the count, in a voice of emotion; "and, at these two noble instances of heroism, my heart beats with enthusiasm, as if I were still twenty."

"And the noble heart of this traveller beat like yours at the recital," said Adrienne; "you will see."

"'What renders so admirable the intrepidity of the prince, is, that, according to the principle of Indian castes, the life of a slave is of no importance; thus a king's son, risking his life for the safety of a poor creature, so generally despised, obeyed an heroic and truly Christian instinct of charity, until then unheard of in this country.

"'"Two such actions," said Colonel Drake, with good reason, "are sufficient to paint the man;" it is with a feeling of profound respect and admiration, therefore, that I, an obscure traveller, have written the name of Prince Djalma in my book; and at the same time, I have experienced a kind of sorrow, when I have asked myself what would be the future fate of this prince, buried in the depths of a savage country, always devastated by war. However humble may be the homage that I pay to this character, worthy of the heroic age, his name will at least be repeated with generous enthusiasm by all those who have hearts that beat in sympathy with what is great and noble.' "

"And just now, when I read those simple and touching lines," resumed Adrienne, "I could not forbear pressing my lips to the name of the traveller."

"Yes; he is such as I thought him," cried the count, with still more emotion, as he returned the book to Adrienne, who rose, with a grave and touching air, and said to him: "It was thus I wished you to know him, that you might understand my adoration; for this courage, this heroic goodness, I had guessed beforehand, when I was an involuntary listener to his conversation. From that moment, I knew him to be generous as intrepid, tender and sensitive as energetic and resolute; and when I saw him so marvellously beautiful—so different, in the noble character of his countenance, and even in the style of his garments, from all I had hitherto met with—when I saw the impression that I made

upon him, and which I perhaps felt still more violently—I knew that my whole life was bound up with his love."

"And now, what are your plans?"

"Divine, radiant as my heart. When he learns his happiness, I wish that Djalma should feel dazzled as I do, so as to prevent my gazing on my sun; for I repeat, that until to-morrow will be a century to me. Yes, it is strange! I should have thought that after such a discovery, I should feel the want of being left alone, plunged in an ocean of delicious dreams. But no! from this time till to-morrow—I dread solitude—I feel a kind of feverish impatience—uneasy—ardent—Oh! where is the beneficent fairy, that, touching me with her wand, will lull me into slumber till to-morrow!"

"I will be that beneficent fairy," said the count, smiling.

"You?"

"Yes, I."

"And how so?"

"The power of my wand is this: I will relieve you from a portion of your thoughts by making them materially visible."

"Pray explain yourself."

"And my plan will have another advantage for you. Listen to me; you are so happy now that you can hear anything. Your odious aunt, and her equally odious friends, are spreading the report that your residence with Dr. Baleinier——"

"Was rendered necessary by the derangement of my mind," said Adrienne, with a smile; "I expected that."

"It is stupid enough; but, as your resolution to live alone makes many envious of you, and many hostile, you must feel that there will be no want of persons ready to believe the most absurd calumny possible."

"I hope as much. To pass for mad in the eyes of fools is very flattering."

"Yes; but to prove to fools that they are fools, and that in the face of all Paris, is much more amusing. Now, people begin to talk of your absence; you have given up your daily rides; for some time my niece has appeared alone in our box at the Opera; you wish to kill the time till to-morrow—well! here is an excellent opportunity. It is two o'clock; at half-past three, my niece will come in the carriage; the weather is splendid; there is sure to be a crowd in the Bois de Boulogne. You can take a delightful ride, and be seen by everybody. Then, as the air and movement will have calmed your fever of happiness, I will commence my magic this evening, and take you to India."

"To India?"

"Into the midst of one of those wild forests, in which roar the lion, the panther, and the tiger. We will have this heroic combat, which so moved you just now, under our own eyes, in all its terrible reality."

"Really, my dear count, you must be joking."

"Not at all; I promise to show you real wild beasts, formidable tenants of the country of our demigod—growling tigers—roaring lions—do you not think that will be better than books?"

"But how?"

"Come! I must give you the secret of my supernatural power. On returning from your ride, you shall dine with my niece, and we will go together to a very curious spectacle now exhibiting at the Porte-Saint-Martin Theatre. A most extraordinary lion-tamer there shows you a number of wild beasts, in a state of nature, in the midst of a forest (here only commences the illusion), and has fierce combats with them all—tigers, lions, and panthers. All Paris is crowding to these representations, and all Paris will see you there, more charming than ever."

"I accept your offer," said Adrienne, with childish delight. "Yes, you are right. I shall feel a strange pleasure in beholding these ferocious monsters, who will remind me of those that my demi-god so heroically overcame. I accept also, because, for the first time in my life, I am anxious to be admired—even by everybody. I accept finally because——" Here Mdlle. de Cardoville was interrupted by a low knock at the door, and by the entrance of Florine, who announced M. Rodin.

CHAPTER X.

THE EXECUTION.

Rodin entered. A rapid glance at Mdlle. de Cardoville and M. de Montbron told him at once that he was in a dilemma. In fact, nothing could be less encouraging than the faces of Adrienne and the count. The latter, when he disliked people, exhibited his antipathy, as we have already said, by an impertinently aggressive manner, which had before now occasioned a good number of duels. At sight of Rodin, his countenance at once assumed a harsh and insolent expres-

sion; resting his elbow on the chimney-piece, and conversing with Adrienne, he looked disdainfully over his shoulder, without taking the least notice of the Jesuit's low bow. On the other hand, at sight of this man, Mdlle. de Cardoville almost felt surprise, that she should experience no movement of anger or hatred. The brilliant flame which burned in her heart, purified it from every vindictive sentiment. She smiled, on the contrary; for, glancing with gentle pride at the Indian Bacchus, and then at herself, she asked herself what two beings, so young, and fair, and free, and loving, could have to fear from this old, sordid man, with his ignoble and base countenance, now advancing towards her with the writhing of a reptile. In a word, far from feeling anger or aversion with regard to Rodin, the young lady seemed full of the spirit of mocking gayety, and her large eyes, already lighted up with happiness, now sparkled with irony and mischief. Rodin felt himself ill at ease. People of his stamp greatly prefer violent to mocking enemies. They can encounter bursts of rage—sometimes by falling on their knees, weeping, groaning, and beating their breasts—sometimes by turning on their adversary, armed and implacable. But they are easily disconcerted by biting raillery; and thus it was with Rodin. He saw that, between Adrienne de Cardoville and M. de Montbron, he was about to be placed in what is vulgarly termed a "regular fix."

The count opened the fire; still glancing over his shoulder, he said to Rodin: "Ah! you are here, my benevolent gentleman!"

"Pray, sir, draw a little nearer," said Adrienne, with a mocking smile. "Best of friends and model of philosophers—as well as declared enemy of all fraud and falsehood—I have to pay you a thousand compliments."

"I accept anything from you, my dear young lady, even though undeserved," said the Jesuit, trying to smile, and thus exposing his vile yellow teeth; "but may I be informed how I have earned these compliments?"

"Your penetration, sir, which is rare——" replied Adrienne.

"And your veracity, sir," said the count, "which is perhaps no less rare——"

"In what, have I exhibited my penetration, my dear young lady?" said Rodin, coldly. "In what my veracity?" added he, turning towards M. de Montbron.

"In what sir?" said Adrienne. "Why, you have guessed a secret surrounded by difficulties and mystery.

In a word, you have known how to read the depths of a woman's heart."

"I, my dear young lady?"

"You, sir! rejoice at it, for your penetration has had the most fortunate results."

"And your veracity has worked wonders," added the count.

"It is pleasant to do good, even without knowing it," said Rodin, still acting on the defensive, and throwing side glances by turns on the count and Adrienne; "but will you inform me what it is that deserves this praise——"

"Gratitude obliges me to inform you of it," said Adrienne, maliciously; "you have discovered, and told Prince Djalma, that I was passionately in love. Well! I admire your penetration; it was true."

"You have also discovered, and told this lady, that Prince Djalma was passionately in love," resumed the count. "Well! I admire your penetration, my dear sir; it was true."

Rodin looked confused, and at a loss for a reply.

"The person that I loved so passionately," said Adrienne, "was the prince."

"The person that the prince loved so passionately," resumed the count, "was this lady."

These revelations, so sudden and alarming, almost stunned Rodin; he remained mute and terrified, thinking of the future.

"Do you understand now, sir, the extent of our gratitude towards you?" resumed Adrienne, in a still more mocking tone. "Thanks to your sagacity, thanks to the touching interest you take in us, the prince and I are indebted to you for the knowledge of our mutual sentiments."

The Jesuit had now gradually recovered his presence of mind, and his apparent calmness greatly irritated M. de Montbron, who, but for Adrienne's presence, would have assumed another tone than jests.

"There is some mistake," said Rodin, "in what you have done me the honor to tell me, my dear young lady. I have never in my life spoken of the sentiments, however worthy and respectable, that you may entertain for Prince Djalma——"

"That is true," replied Adrienne; "with scrupulous and exquisite discretion, whenever you spoke to me of the deep love felt by Prince Djalma, you carried your reserve and delicacy so far as to inform me that it was not I whom he loved."

"And the same scruple induced you to tell the prince that Mdlle. de Cardoville loved some one passionately—but that he was not the person," added the count.

"Sir," answered Rodin, dryly, "I need hardly tell you that I have no desire to mix myself up with amorous intrigues."

"Come! this is either pride or modesty," said the count, insolently. "For your own interest, pray do not advance such things; for, if we took you at your word, and it became known, it might injure some of the nice little trades that you carry on."

"There is one at least," said Rodin, drawing himself up as proudly as M. de Montbron, "whose rude apprenticeship I shall owe to you. It is the wearisome one of listening to your discourse."

"I tell you what, my good sir!" replied the count, disdainfully: "you force me to remind you that there are more ways than one of chastising impudent rogues."

"My dear count!" said Adrienne to M. de Montbron, with an air of reproach.

With perfect coolness, Rodin replied: "I do not exactly see, sir, first, what courage is shown by threatening a poor old man like myself; and, secondly——"

"M. Rodin," said the count, interrupting the Jesuit, "first, a poor old man like you, who does evil under the shelter of the age he dishonors, is both cowardly and wicked, and deserves a double chastisement; secondly, with regard to this question of age, I am not aware that gamekeepers and policemen bow down respectfully to the gray coats of old wolves, and the gray hairs of old thieves. What do you think, my good sir?"

Still impassible, Rodin raised his flabby eyelid, fixed for hardly a second his little reptile eye upon the count, and darted at him one of his rapid, cold, and piercing glances—and then the livid eyelid again covered the dull eye of that corpse-like face.

"Not having the disadvantage of being an old wolf, and still less an old thief," said Rodin, quietly, "you will permit me, sir, to take no account of the pursuit of hunters and police. As for the reproaches made me, I have a very simple method of answering—I do not say of justifying myself—I never justify myself——"

"You don't say!" said the count.

"Never," resumed Rodin coolly; "my acts are sufficient for that. I will then simply answer, that seeing the deep,

violent, almost fearful impression made by this lady on the prince——"

"Let this assurance which you give me of the prince's love," said Adrienne interrupting Rodin with an enchanting smile, "absolve you of all the evil you wished to do me. The sight of our happiness be your only punishment!"

"It may be that I need neither absolution nor punishment, for, as I have already had the honor to observe to the count, my dear young lady, the future will justify my acts. Yes; it was my duty to tell the prince that you loved another than himself, and to tell you that he loved another than yourself—all in your mutual interest. That my attachment for you may have misled me, is possible—I am not infallible; but, after my past conduct towards you, my dear young lady, I have, perhaps, some right to be astonished at seeing myself thus treated. This is not a complaint. If I never justify myself, I never complain either."

"Now really, there is something heroic in all this, my good sir," said the count. "You do not condescend to complain or justify yourself, with regard to the evil you have done."

"The evil I have done?" said Rodin, looking fixedly at the count. "Are we playing at enigmas?"

"What, sir!" cried the count, with indignation: "is it nothing, by your falsehoods, to have plunged the prince into so frightful a state of despair, that he has twice attempted his life? Is it nothing, by similar falsehoods, to have induced this lady to believe so cruel and complete an error, that but for the resolution I have to-day taken, it might have led to the most fatal consequences?"

"And will you do me the honor to tell me, sir, what interest I could have in all this despair and error, admitting even that I had wished to produce them?"

"Some great interest, no doubt," said the count, bluntly; "the more dangerous that it is concealed. You are one of those, I see, to whom the woes of others are pleasure and profit."

"That is really too much, sir," said Rodin, bowing; "I should be quite contented with the profit."

"Your impudent coolness will not deceive me; this is a serious matter," said the count. "It is impossible that so perfidious a piece of roguery can be an isolated act. Who knows but this may still be one of the fruits of Madame de Saint-Dizier's hatred for Mdlle. de Cardoville?"

Adrienne had listened to the preceding discussion with

deep attention. Suddenly she started, as if struck by a sudden revelation.

After a moment's silence, she said to Rodin, without anger, without bitterness, but with an expression of gentle and serene calmness: "We are told, sir, that happy love works miracles. I should be tempted to believe it; for, after some minutes' reflection, and when I recall certain circumstances, your conduct appears to me in quite a new light."

"And what may this new perspective be, my dear young lady?"

"That you may see it from my point of view, sir, allow me to remind you of a few facts. That sewing-girl was generously devoted to me; she had given me unquestionable proofs of her attachment. Her mind was equal to her noble heart; but she had an invincible dislike to you. All on a sudden she disappears mysteriously from my house, and you do your best to cast upon her odious suspicions. M. de Montbron has a paternal affection for me; but, as I must confess, little sympathy for you; and you have always tried to produce a coldness between us. Finally, Prince Djalma has a deep affection for me, and you employ the most perfidious treachery to kill that sentiment within him. For what end do you act thus? I do not know; but certainly with some hostile design."

"It appears to me, madame," said Rodin, severely, "that you have forgotten services performed."

"I do not deny, sir, that you took me from the house of Dr. Baleinier; but, a few days sooner or later, I must infallibly have been released by M. de Montbron."

"You are right, my dear child," said the count; "it may be that your enemies wished to claim the merit of what must necessarily have happened through the exertions of your friends."

"You are drowning, and I save you—it is all a mistake to feel grateful," said Rodin, bitterly; "some one else would no doubt have saved you a little later."

"The comparison is wanting in exactness," said Adrienne, with a smile; "a lunatic asylum is not a river, and though, from what I see, I think you quite capable of diving, you have had no occasion to swim on this occasion. You merely opened a door for me, which would have opened of itself a little later."

"Very good, my dear child!" said the count, laughing heartily at Adrienne's reply.

"I know, sir, that your care did not extend to me only. The daughters of Marshal Simon were brought back by you; but we may imagine that the claim of the Duke de Ligny to the possession of his daughters would not have been in vain. You returned to an old soldier his imperial cross, which he held to be a sacred relic; it is a very touching incident. Finally, you unmasked the Abbé d'Aigrigny and Dr. Baleinier; but I had already made up my mind to unmask them. However, all this proves that you are a very clever man——"

"Oh, madame!" said Rodin, humbly.

"Full of resources and invention——"

"Oh, madame!"

"It is not my fault if, in our long interview at Dr. Baleinier's, you betrayed that superiority of mind which struck me so forcibly, and which seems to embarrass you so much at present. What would you have, sir?—great minds like yours find it difficult to maintain their incognito. Yet, as by different ways—oh! very different," added the young lady, maliciously, "we are tending to the same end (still keeping in view our conversation at Dr. Baleinier's), I wish, for the sake of our future communion, as you call it, to give you a piece of advice, and speak frankly to you."

Rodin had listened to Mdlle. de Cardoville with apparent impassibility, holding his hat under his arm, and twirling his thumbs, whilst his hands were crossed upon his waistcoat. The only external mark of the intense agitation into which he was thrown by the calm words of Adrienne, was that the livid eyelids of the Jesuit, which had been hypocritically closed, became gradually red, as the blood flowed into them. Nevertheless, he answered Mdlle. de Cardoville in a firm voice, and with a low bow: "Good advice and frankness are always excellent things."

"You see, sir," resumed Adrienne, with some excitement, "happy love bestows such penetration, such energy, such courage, as enables one to laugh at perils, to detect stratagems, and to defy hatred. Believe me, the divine light which surrounds two loving hearts will be sufficient to disperse all darkness, and reveal every snare. You see, in India—excuse my weakness, but I like to talk of India," added the young girl, with a smile of indescribable grace and meaning—"in India, when travellers sleep at night, they kindle great fires round their ajoupa (excuse this touch of local coloring), and far as extends the luminous circle, it puts to flight by its mere brilliancy, all the impure and

venomous reptiles that shun the day and live only in darkness."

"The meaning of this comparison has quite escaped me," said Rodin, continuing to twirl his thumbs, and half raising his eyelids, which were getting redder and redder.

"I will speak more plainly," said Adrienne, with a smile. "Suppose, sir, that the last is a service which you have rendered me and the prince—for you only proceed by way of services—that, I acknowledge, is novel and ingenious."

"Bravo, my dear child!" said the count, joyfully. "The execution will be complete."

"Oh! this is meant for an execution?" said Rodin, still impassible.

"No, sir," answered Adrienne, with a smile; "it is a simple conversation between a poor young girl and an old philosopher, the friend of humanity. Suppose, then, that these frequent services that you have rendered to me and mine have suddenly opened my eyes; or, rather," added the young girl, in a serious tone, "suppose that heaven, who gives to the mother the instinct to defend her child, has given me, along with happiness, the instinct to preserve my happiness, and that a vague presentiment, by throwing light on a thousand circumstances until now obscure, has suddenly revealed to me that, instead of being the friend, you are, perhaps, the most dangerous enemy of myself and family."

"So we pass from the execution to suppositions," said Rodin, still immovable.

"And from suppositions, sir, if you must have it, to certainty," resumed Adrienne, with dignified firmness; "yes, now I believe that I was for awhile your dupe, and I tell you, without hate, without anger, but with regret—that it is painful to see a man of your sense and intelligence stoop to such machinations, and, after having recourse to so many diabolical manœuvres, finish at last by being ridiculous; for, believe me, there is nothing more ridiculous for a man like you, than to be vanquished by a young girl, who has no weapon, no defence, no instructor, but her love. In a word, sir, I look upon you from to-day as an implacable and dangerous enemy; for I half perceive your aim, without guessing by what means you will seek to accomplish it. No doubt your future means will be worthy of the past. Well! in spite of all this, I do not fear you. From to-morrow, my family will be informed of everything, and an active, intelligent, resolute union will keep us all upon our

guard, for it doubtless concerns this enormous inheritance, of which they wish to deprive us. Now, what connection can there be between the wrongs I reproach you with and the pecuniary end proposed? I do not at all know—but you have told me yourself that our enemies are so dangerously skilful, and their craft so far-reaching, that we must expect all, be prepared for all. I will remember the lesson. I have promised you frankness, sir, and now I suppose you have it."

"It would be an imprudent frankness if I were your enemy," said Rodin, still impassible; "but you also promised me some advice, my dear young lady."

"My advice will be short; do not attempt to continue the struggle, because, you see, there is something stronger than you and yours—it is a woman's resolve, defending her happiness."

Adrienne pronounced these last words with so sovereign a confidence; her beautiful countenance shone, as it were, with such intrepid joy, that Rodin, notwithstanding his phlegmatic audacity, was for a moment frightened. Yet he did not appear in the least disconcerted; and, after a moment's silence, he resumed, with an air of almost contemptuous compassion: "My dear young lady, we may perhaps never meet again; it is probable. Only remember one thing, which I now repeat to you: I never justify myself. The future will provide for that. Notwithstanding which, my dear young lady, I am your very humble servant;" and he made her a low bow.

"Count, I beg to salute you most respectfully," he added, bowing still more humble to M. de Montbron; and he went out.

Hardly had Rodin left the room than Adrienne ran to her desk, and writing a few hasty lines, sealed the note, and said to M. de Montbron: "I shall not see the prince before to-morrow—as much from superstition of the heart as because it is necessary for my plans that this interview should be attended with some little solemnity. You shall know all; but I write to him on the instant, for, with an enemy like M. Rodin, one must be prepared for all."

"You are right, my dear child; quick! the letter." Adrienne gave it to him.

"I tell him enough," said she, "to calm his grief; and not enough to deprive me of the delicious happiness of the surprise I reserve for to-morrow."

"All this has as much sense as heart in it: I will hasten

to the prince's abode, to deliver your letter. I shall not see him, for I could not answer for myself. But come! our proposed drive, our evening's amusement, are still to hold good."

"Certainly. I have more need than ever to divert my thoughts till to-morrow. I feel, too, that the fresh air will do me good, for this interview with M. Rodin has warmed me a little."

"The old wretch! but we will talk further of him. I will hasten to the prince's and return with Madame de Morinval, to fetch you to the Champs-Elysées."

The Count de Montbron withdrew precipitately, as joyful at his departure as he had been sad on his arrival.

CHAPTER XI.

THE CHAMPS-ELYSEES.

It was about two hours after the interview of Rodin with Mdlle. de Cardoville. Numerous loungers, attracted to the Champs-Elysées by the serenity of a fine spring day (it was towards the end of the month of March), stopped to admire a very handsome equipage. A bright-blue open carriage, with white-and-blue wheels, drawn by four superb horses, of cream color, with black manes, and harness glittering with silver ornaments, mounted by two boy postilions of equal size, with black velvet caps, light-blue cassimere jackets with white collars, buckskin breeches, and top-boots; two tall, powdered footmen, also in light-blue livery, with white collars and facings, being seated in the rumble behind. No equipage could have been turned out in better style. The horses, full of blood, spirit, and vigor, were skilfully managed by the postilions, and stepped with singular regularity, gracefully keeping time in their movements, champing their bits covered with foam, and ever and anon shaking their cockades of blue and white silk, with long floating ends, and a bright rose blooming in the midst.

A man on horseback, dressed with elegant simplicity, keeping at the other side of the avenue, contemplated with proud satisfaction this equipage which he had, as it were, created. It was M. de Bonneville—Adrienne's equerry, as M. de Montbron called him—for the carriage belonged to that young lady. A change had taken place in the plan for

this magic day's amusement. M. de Montbron had not been able to deliver Mdlle. de Cardoville's note to Prince Djalma. Faringhea had told him that the prince had gone that morning into the country with Marshal Simon, and would not be back before evening. The letter should be given him on his arrival. Completely satisfied as to Djalma, knowing that he could find these few lines, which, without informing him of the happiness that awaited him, would at least give him some idea of it, Adrienne had followed the advice of M. de Montbron, and gone to the drive in her own carriage, to show all the world that she had quite made up her mind, in spite of the perfidious reports circulated by the Princess de Saint-Dizier, to keep to her resolution of living by herself in her own way. Adrienne wore a small white bonnet, with a fall of blonde, which well became her rosy face and golden hair; her high dress of garnet-colored velvet was almost hidden beneath a large green cashmere shawl. The young Marchioness de Morinval, who was also very pretty and elegant, was seated at her right. M. de Montbron occupied the front seat of the carriage.

Those who know the Parisian world, or rather, that imperceptible fraction of the world of Paris which goes every fine, sunny day to the Champs-Elysées, to see and be seen, will understand that the presence of Mdlle. de Cardoville on that brilliant promenade was an extraordinary and interesting event.

The world (as it is called) could hardly believe its eyes, on seeing this lady of eighteen, possessed of princely wealth, and belonging to the highest nobility, thus prove to every one, by this appearance in public, that she was living completely free and independent, contrary to all custom and received notions of propriety. This kind of emancipation appeared something monstrous, and people were almost astonished that the graceful and dignified bearing of the young lady should belie so completely the calumnies circulated by Madame de Saint-Dizier and her friends, with regard to the pretended madness of her niece. Many beaux, profiting by their acquaintance with the Marchioness de Morinval or M. de Montbron, came by turns to pay their respects, and rode for a few minutes by the side of the carriage, so as to have an opportunity of seeing, admiring, and perhaps hearing, Mdlle. de Cardoville; she surpassed their expectations, by talking with her usual grace and spirit. Then surprise and enthusiasm knew no bounds. What had at first been blamed as an almost insane caprice,

was now voted a charming originality, and it only depended on Mdlle. de Cardoville herself, to be declared from that day the queen of elegance and fashion. The young lady understood very well the impression she had made; she felt proud and happy, for she thought of Djalma; when she compared him to all these men of fashion, her happiness was the more increased. And, verily, these young men, most of whom had never quitted Paris, or had ventured at most as far as Naples or Baden, looked insignificant enough by the side of Djalma, who, at his age, had so many times commanded and combated in bloody wars, and whose reputation for courage and generosity, mentioned by travellers with admiration, had already reached from India to Paris. And then, how could these charming exquisites, with their small hats, their scanty frock-coats, and their huge cravats, compare with the Indian prince, whose graceful and manly beauty was still heightened by the splendor of a costume, at once so rich and so picturesque?

On this happy day, all was joy and love for Adrienne. The sun, setting in a splendidly serene sky, flooded the promenade with its golden light. The air was warm. Carriages and horsemen passed and repassed in rapid succession; a light breeze played with the scarfs of the women, and the plumes in their bonnets; all around was noise, movement, sunshine. Adrienne, leaning back in her carriage, amused herself with watching this busy scene, sparkling with Parisian luxury; but, in the vortex of this brilliant chaos, she saw in thought the mild, melancholy countenance of Djalma—when suddenly something fell into her lap, and she started. It was a bunch of half-faded violets. At the same instant she heard a child's voice following the carriage, and saying: "For the love of heaven, my good lady, one little sou!" Adrienne turned her head, and saw a poor little girl, pale and wan, with mild, sorrowful features, scarcely covered with rags, holding out her hand, and raising her eyes in supplication. Though the striking contrast of extreme misery, side by side with extreme luxury, is so common, that it no longer excites attention, Adrienne was deeply affected by it. She thought of Mother Bunch, now, perhaps, the victim of frightful destitution.

"Ah! at least," thought the young lady, "let not this day be one of happiness for me alone!"

She leaned from the carriage-window, and said to the poor child: "Have you a mother, my dear?"

"No, my lady, I have neither father nor mother."

"Who takes care of you?"

"No one, my lady. They give me nosegays to sell, and I must bring home money—or they beat me."

"Poor little thing!"

"A sou, my good lady—a sou, for the love of heaven!" said the child, continuing to follow the carriage, which was then moving slowly.

"My dear count," said Adrienne, smiling, and addressing M. de Montbron, "you are, unfortunately, no novice at an elopement. Please to stretch forth your arms, take up that child with both hands, and lift her into the carriage. We can hide her between Lady de Morinval and myself; and we can drive away before any one perceives this audacious abduction."

"What!" said the count, in surprise. "You wish——"

"Yes; I beg you to do it."

"What a folly!"

"Yesterday, you might, perhaps, have treated this caprice as a folly; but to-day," said Adrienne, laying great stress upon the word, and glancing at M. de Montbron with a significant air, "to-day, you should understand that it is almost a duty."

"Yes, I understand you, good and noble heart!" said the count, with emotion; while Lady de Morinval, who knew nothing of Mdlle. de Cardovllie's love for Djalma, looked with as much surprise as curiosity at the count and the young lady.

M. de Montbron, leaning from the carriage, stretched out his arms towards the child, and said to her: "Give me your hands, little girl."

Though much astonished, the child obeyed mechanically, and held out both her little arms; then the count took her by the wrists, and lifted her lightly from the ground, which he did the more easily, as the carriage was very low, and its progress by no means rapid. More stupefied than frightened, the child said not a word. Adrienne and Lady de Morinval made room for her to crouch down between them, and the little girl was soon hidden beneath the shawls of the two young women. All this was executed so quickly, that it was hardly perceived by a few persons passing in the side-avenues.

"Now, my dear count," said Adrienne, radiant with pleasure, "let us make off at once with our prey."

M. de Montbron half rose, and called to the postilions,

"Home!" and the four horses started at once into a rapid and regular trot.

"This day of happiness now seems consecrated, and my luxury is excused," thought Adrienne; "till I can again meet with that poor Mother Bunch, and from this day I will make every exertion to find her out, her place will at least not be quite empty."

There are often strange coincidences in life. At the moment when this thought of the hunchback crossed the mind of Adrienne, a crowd had collected in one of the side-avenues, and other persons soon ran to join the group.

"Look, uncle!" said Lady de Morinval; "how many people are assembled yonder. What can it be? Shall we stop, and send to inquire?"

"I am sorry, my dear, but your curiosity cannot be satisfied," said the count, drawing out his watch; "it will soon be six o'clock, and the exhibition of the wild beasts begins at eight. We shall only just have time to go home and dine. Is not that your opinion, my dear child?" said he to Adrienne.

"And yours, Julia?" said Mdlle. de Cardoville to the marchioness.

"Oh, certainly!" answered her friend.

"I am the less inclined to delay," resumed the count, "as when I have taken you to the Porte-Saint-Martin, I shall be obliged to go for half-an-hour to my club, to ballot for Lord Campbell, whom I propose."

"Then, Adrienne and I will be left alone at the play, uncle?"

"Your husband will go with you, I suppose."

"True, dear uncle; but do not quite leave us, because of that."

"Be sure I shall not: for I am curious as you are to see these terrible animals, and the famous Morok, the incomparable lion-tamer."

A few minutes after, Mdlle. de Cardoville's carriage had left the Champs-Elysées, carrying with it the little girl, and directing its course towards the Rue d'Anjou. As the brilliant equipage disappeared from the scene, the crowd, of which we before have spoken, greatly increased about one of the large trees in the Champs-Elysées, and expressions of pity were heard here and there amongst the groups. A lounger approached a young man on the skirts of the crowd, and said to him: "What is the matter, sir?"

"I hear it is a poor young girl, a hunchback, that has fallen from exhaustion."

"A hunchback! is that all? There will always be enough hunchbacks," said the lounger, brutally, with a coarse laugh.

"Hunchback or not, if she dies of hunger," answered the young man, scarcely able to restrain his indignation, "it will be no less sad—and there is really nothing to laugh at, sir."

"Die of hunger! pooh!" said the lounger, shrugging his shoulders. "It is only lazy scoundrels, that will not work, who die of hunger. And it serves them right."

"I wager, sir, there is one death you will never die of," cried the young man, incensed at the cruel insolence of the lounger.

"What do you mean?" answered the other, haughtily.

"I mean, sir, that your heart is not likely to kill you."

"Sir!" cried the lounger in an angry tone.

"Well! what, sir?" replied the young man, looking full in his face.

"Nothing," said the lounger, turning abruptly on his heel, and grumbling as he sauntered towards an orange-colored cabriolet, on which was emblazoned an enormous coat-of-arms, surmounted by a baron's crest. A servant in green livery, ridiculously laced with gold, was standing beside the horse, and did not perceive his master.

"Are you catching flies, fool?" said the latter, pushing him with his cane. The servant turned round in confusion. "Sir," said he.

"Will you never learn to call me Monsieur le Baron, rascal?" cried his master, in a rage.—"Open the door directly!"

The lounger was Baron Tripeaud, the manufacturing baron, the stock-jobber. The poor hunchback was Mother Bunch, who had, indeed, fallen with hunger and fatigue, whilst on her way to Mdlle. de Cardoville's. The unfortunate creature had found courage to brave the shame of the ridicule she so much feared, by returning to that house from which she was a voluntary exile; but this time, it was not for herself, but for her sister Cephyse—the Bacchanal Queen, who had returned to Paris the previous day, and whom Mother Bunch now sought, through the means of Adrienne, to rescue from a most dreadful fate.

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Two hours after these different scenes, an enormous crowd pressed round the doors of the Porte-Saint-Martin, to wit-

ness the exercises of Morok, who was about to perform a mock combat with the famous black panther of Java, named Death. Adrienne, accompanied by Lord and Lady de Morinval, now stepped from a carriage at the entrance of the theatre. They were to be joined in the course of the evening by M. de Montbron, whom they had dropped, in passing, at his club.

CHAPTER XII.

BEHIND THE SCENES.

The large theatre of the Porte-Saint-Martin was crowded by an impatient multitude. All Paris had hurried with eager and burning curiosity to Morok's exhibition. It is quite unnecessary to say that the lion-tamer had completely abandoned his small taste in religious baubles, which he had so successfully carried on at the White Falcon Inn at Leipsic. There were, moreover, numerous tokens by which the surprising effects of Morok's sudden conversion had been blazoned in the most extraordinary pictures: the antiquated baubles in which he had formerly dealt would have found no sale in Paris. Morok had nearly finished dressing himself, in one of the actor's rooms, which had been lent to him. Over a coat of mail, with cuishes and brassarts, he wore an ample pair of red trousers, fastened round his ankles by broad rings of gilt brass. His long caftan of black cloth, embroidered with scarlet and gold, was bound round his waist and wrist by other large rings of gilt metal. This sombre costume imparted to him an aspect still more ferocious. His thick and red-haired beard fell in large quantities down to his chest, and a long piece of white muslin was folded round his red head. A devout missionary in Germany and an actor in Paris, Morok knew as well as his employers, the Jesuits, how to accommodate himself to circumstances.

Seated in one corner of the room, and contemplating with a sort of stupid admiration, was Jacques Rennepont, better known as "Sleepinbuff" (from the likelihood that he would end his days in rags, or his present antipathy to great care in dress). Since the day Hardy's factory had been destroyed by fire, Jacques had not quitted Morok, passing the nights in excesses, which had no baneful effects on the iron con-

stitution of the lion-tamer. On the other's features, on the contrary, a great alteration was perceptible; his hollow cheeks, marble pallor, his eyes, by turns dull and heavy, or gleaming with lurid fire, betrayed the ravages of debauchery, his parched lips were almost constantly curled by a bitter and sardonic smile. His spirit, once gay and sanguine, still struggled against the besotting influence of habitual intoxication. Unfitted for labor, no longer able to forego gross pleasures, Jacques sought to drown in wine a few virtuous impulses which he still possessed, and had sunk so low as to accept without shame the large dole of sensual gratification proffered him by Morok, who paid all the expenses of their orgies, but never gave him money, in order that he might be completely dependent on him. After gazing at Morok for some time in amazement, Jacques said to him, in a familiar tone: "Well, yours is a famous trade; you may boast that, at this moment, there are not two men like you in the whole world. That's flattering. It's a pity you don't stick to this fine trade."

"What do you mean?"

"Why, how is the conspiracy going on, in whose honor you make me keep it up all day and all night?"

"It is working, but the time is not yet come; that is why I wish to have you always at hand, till the great day. Do you complain?"

"Hang it, no!" said Jacques. "What could I do? Burnt up with brandy as I am, if I wanted to work, I've no longer the strength to do so. I have not, like you, a head of marble, and a body of iron; but as for fuddling myself with gunpowder, instead of anything else, that'll do for me: I'm only fit for that work now—and then, it will drive away thought."

"Of what kind?"

"You know that when I do think, I think only of one thing," said Jacques, gloomily.

"The Bacchanal Queen?—still?" said Morok, in a disdainful tone.

"Still! rather: when I shall think of her no longer, I shall be dead—or stupefied. Fiend!"

"You were never better or more intelligent, you fool!" replied Morok, fastening his turban. The conversation was here interrupted. Morok's aider entered hastily.

The gigantic form of this Hercules had increased in width. He was habited like Alcides; his enormous limbs, furrowed with veins as thick as whipcord, were covered

with a close-fitting flesh-colored garment, to which a pair of red drawers formed a strong contrast.

"Why do you rush in like a storm, Goliath?" said Morok.

"There's a pretty storm in the house; they are beginning to get impatient, and are calling out like madmen. But if that were all!"

"Well, what else?"

"*Death* will not be able to play this evening."

Morok turned quickly around. He seemed uneasy. "Why so?" he exclaimed.

"I have just seen her; she's crouching at the bottom of her cage; her ears lie so close to her head, she looks as if they had been cut off. You know what that means."

"Is that all?" said Morok, turning to the glass to complete his head-dress.

"It's quite enough; she's in one of her tearing fits. Since that night in Germany, when she ripped up that old hack of a white horse, I've not seen her look so savage! her eyes shine like burning candles."

"Then she must have her fine collar on," said Morok, quietly.

"Her fine collar?"

"Yes; her spring-collar."

"And I must be lady's-maid," said the giant. "A nice toilet to attend to!"

"Hold your tongue!"

"That's not all——" continued Goliath, hesitating.

"What more?"

"I might as well tell you at once."

"Will you speak?"

"Well! he is here."

"Who, you stupid brute?"

"The Englishman!"

"Morok started; his arms fell powerless by his side. Jacques was struck with the lion-tamer's paleness and troubled countenance.

"The Englishman!—you have seen him?" cried Morok, addressing Goliath. "You are quite sure?"

"Quite sure. I was looking through the peep-hole in the curtain; I saw him in one of the stage-boxes—he wishes to see things close; he's easy to recognize, with his pointed forehead, big nose, and goggle eyes.

Morok shuddered again; usually fierce and unmoved, he appeared to be more and more agitated, and so alarmed, that Jacques said to him: "Who is this Englishman?"

"He has followed me from Strasburg, where he fell in with me," said Morok, with visible dejection. "He travelled with his own horses, by short stages, as I did; stopping where I stopped, so as never to miss one of my exhibitions. But two days before I arrived at Paris, he left me—I thought I was rid of him," said Morok, with a sigh.

"Rid of him!—how you talk!" replied Jacques, surprised; "such a good customer, such an admirer!"

"Aye!" said Morok, becoming more and more agitated; "this wretch has wagered an enormous sum, that I will be devoured in his presence, during one of my performances: he hopes to win his wager—that is why he follows me about."

Sleepinbuff found the John Bull's idea so amusingly eccentric, that, for the first time since a very long period, he burst into a peal of hearty laughter. Morok, pale with rage, rushed towards him with so menacing an air, that Goliath was obliged to interpose.

"Come, come," said Jacques, "don't be angry; if it is serious, I will not laugh any more."

Morok was appeased, and said to Sleepinbuff in a hoarse voice: "Do you think me a coward?"

"No, by heaven!"

"Well! and yet this Englishman, with his grotesque face, frightens me more than my tiger or my panther!"

"You say so, and I believe it," replied Jacques; "but I cannot understand why the presence of this man should alarm you."

"But consider, you dull knave!" cried Morok, "that, obliged to watch incessantly, the least movement of the ferocious beast, whom I keep in subjection by my action and my looks, there is something terrible in knowing that two eyes are there—always there—fixed—waiting till the least absence of mind shall expose me to be torn in pieces by the animals."

"Now, I understand," said Jacques, shuddering in his turn. "It is terrible."

"Yes; for once there, though I may not see this cursed Englishman, I fancy I have his two round eyes, fixed and wide open, always before me. My tiger *Cain* once nearly mutilated my arm, when my attention was drawn away by this Englishman, whom the devil take! Blood and thunder!" cried Morok: "this man will be fatal to me." And Morok paced the room in great agitation.

"Besides, *Death* lays her ears close to her skull," said

Goliath, brutally. "If you persist—mind, I tell you—the Englishman will win his wager this evening."

"Go away, you brute!—don't vex my head with your confounded predictions," cried Morok: "go and prepare *Death's* collar."

"Well, every one to his taste; you wish the panther to *taste* you," said the giant, stalking heavily away, after this joke.

"But if you feel these fears," said Jacques, "why do you not say that the panther is ill?"

Morok shrugged his shoulders, and replied with a sort of feverish ferocity, "Have you ever heard of the fierce pleasure of the gamester, who stakes his honor, his life, upon a card? Well! I too—in these daily exhibitions where my life is at stake—find a wild, fierce pleasure in braving death, before a crowded assembly, shuddering and terrified at my audacity. Yes, even in the fear with which this Englishman inspires me, I find, in spite of myself, a terrible excitement, which I abhor, and which yet subjugates me."

At this moment, the stage-manager entered the room, and interrupted the beast-tamer. "May we give the signal, M. Morok?" said the stage-manager. "The overture will not last above ten minutes."

"I am ready," said Morok.

"The police-inspector has just now given orders, that the double chain of the panther, and the iron ring riveted to the floor of the stage, at the end of the cavern in the foreground, shall be again examined; and everything has been reported quite secure."

"Yes—secure—except for me," murmured the beast-tamer.

"So, M. Morok, the signal may be given?"

"The signal may be given," replied Morok. And the manager went out.

CHAPTER XIII.

UP WITH THE CURTAIN.

The usual bell sounded with solemnity behind the scenes; the overture began, and, to say the truth, but little attention was paid to it. The interior of the theatre offered a very animated view. With the exception of two stage-boxes even with the dress circle, one to the left, the other to the right

of the audience, every seat was occupied. A great number of very fashionable ladies, attracted, as is always the case, by the strange wildness of the spectacle, filled the boxes. The stalls were crowded by most of the young men who, in the morning, had walked their horses on the Champs-Elysées. The observations which passed from one stall to another, will give some idea of their conversation.

"Do you know, my dear boy, there would not be so crowded or fashionable an audience to witness Racine's Athalia?"

"Undoubtedly. What is the beggarly howling of an actor, compared to the roaring of the lion?"

"I cannot understand how the authorities permit this Morok to fasten his panther with a chain to an iron ring in the corner of the stage. If the chain were to break?"

"Talking of broken chains—there's little Mme. de Blinville, who is no tigress. Do you see her in the second tier, opposite?"

"It becomes her very well to have broken, as you say, the marriage chain; she looks very well this season."

"Oh! there is the beautiful Duchess de Saint-Prix; all the world is here to-night—I don't speak of ourselves."

"It is a regular opera night—what a festive scene!"

"Well, after all, people do well to amuse themselves; perhaps it will not be for long."

"Why so?"

"Suppose the cholera were to come to Paris?"

"Oh! nonsense!"

"Do *you* believe in the cholera?"

"To be sure I do! He's coming from the North, with his walking-stick under his arm."

"The devil take him on the road! don't let us see his green visage here."

"They say he's at London."

"A pleasant journey to him."

"Come, let us talk of something else; it may be a weakness, if you please, but I call this a dull subject."

"I believe you."

"Oh! gentlemen—I am not mistaken—no—it is she!"

"Who, then?"

"Mdlle. de Cardoville! She is coming into the stage-box with Morinval and his wife. It is a complete resuscitation; this morning on the Champs-Elysées; in the evening here."

"Faith, you are right! It is Mdlle. de Cardoville."

"Good heaven! how lovely she is!"

"Lend me your eyeglass."

"Well, what do you think of her?"

"Exquisite—dazzling "

"And in addition to her beauty, an inexhaustible flow of wit, three hundred thousand francs a year, high birth, eighteen years of age, and—free as air."

"Yes, that is to say, that, provided it pleased her, I might be to-morrow—or even to-day—the happiest of men."

"It is enough to turn one's brain."

"I am told that her mansion, Rue d'Anjou, is like an enchanted palace: a great deal is said about a bath-room and bedroom, worthy of the Arabian Nights."

"And free as air—I come back to that."

"Ah! if I were in her place!"

"My levity would be quite shocking."

"Oh! gentlemen, what a happy man will he be who is loved first!"

"You think, then, that she will have many lovers?"

"Being as free as air——"

"All the boxes are full, except the stage-box opposite to that in which Mdlle. de Cardoville is seated. Happy the occupiers of that box!"

"Did you see the English ambassador's lady in the dress-circle?"

"And the Princess d'Alvimar—what an enormous bouquet!"

"I should like to know the name—of that nosegay."

"Oh!—it's Germigny."

"How flattering for the lions and tigers, to attract so fashionable an audience."

"Do you notice, gentlemen, how all the women are eyeglassing Mdlle. de Cardoville?"

"She makes a sensation."

"She is right to show herself; they gave her out as mad."

"Oh! gentlemen, what a capital phiz!"

"Where—where?"

"There—in the omnibus-box beneath Mdlle. de Cardoville's."

"It's a Nuremburg nutcracker."

"An ourang-outang!"

"Did you ever see such round, staring eyes?"

"And the nose!"

"And the forehead!"

"It's a caricature."

"Order, order! the curtain rises."

And, in fact, the curtain rose. Some explanation is necessary for the clear understanding of what follows. In the lower stage-box, to the left of the audience, were several persons, who had been referred to by the young men in the stalls. The omnibus-box was occupied by the Englishman, the eccentric and portentous bettor, whose presence inspired Morok with so much dread.

It would require Hoffman's rare and fantastic genius to describe worthily that countenance, at once grotesque and frightful, as it stood out from the dark background of the box. This Englishman was about fifty years old; his forehead was quite bald, and of a conical shape; beneath this forehead, surmounted by eyebrows like parenthesis marks, glittered large, green eyes, remarkably round and staring, and set very close to a hooked nose, extremely sharp and prominent; a chin like that on the old-fashioned nutcrackers was half-hidden in a broad and ample white cravat, as stiffly starched as the round-cornered shirt-collar, which nearly touched his ears. The face was exceedingly thin and bony, and yet the complexion was high-colored, approaching to purple, which made the bright green of the pupils, and the white of the other part of the eyes, still more conspicuous. The mouth, which was very wide, sometimes whistled inaudibly the tune of a Scotch jig (always the same tune), sometimes was slightly curled with a sardonic smile. The Englishman was dressed with extreme care; his blue coat, with brass buttons, displayed his spotless waistcoat, snowy white as his ample cravat; his shirt was fastened with two magnificent ruby studs, and his patrician hands were carefully kid-gloved.

To any one who knew the eccentric and cruel desire which attracted this man to every representation, his grotesque face became almost terrific, instead of exciting ridicule; and it was easy to understand the dread experienced by Morok at sight of those great, staring round eyes, which appeared to watch for the death of the lion-tamer (what a horrible death!) with unshaken confidence. Above the dark box of the Englishman, affording a graceful contrast, were seated the Morinvals and Mdlle. de Cardoville. The latter was placed nearest the stage. Her head was uncovered, and she wore a dress of sky-blue China crape, ornamented at the bosom with a brooch of the finest Oriental pearls—nothing more; yet Adrienne, thus attired, was charming. She held in her hand an enormous bouquet, composed of the rarest flowers of India: the stephanotis and the gardenia mingled

he dead white of their blossoms with the purple hibiscus and Java amaryllis.

Madame de Morinval, seated on the opposite side of the box, was dressed with equal taste and simplicity; Morinval, a fair and very handsome young man, of elegant appearance, was behind the two ladies. M. de Montbron was expected to arrive every moment. The reader will please to recollect that the stage-box to the right of the audience, opposite Adrienne's, had remained till then quite empty. The stage represented one of the gigantic forests of India. In the background, tall exotic trees rose in spiral or spreading forms, among rugged masses of perpendicular rocks, with here and there glimpses of a tropical sky. The side-scenes formed tufts of trees, interspersed with rocks; and at the side which was immediately beneath Adrienne's box appeared the irregular opening of a deep and gloomy cavern, round which were heaped huge blocks of granite, as if thrown together by some convulsion of nature. This scenery, full of a wild and savage grandeur, was wonderfully "built up," so as to make the illusion as complete as possible; the foot-lights were lowered, and, being covered with a purple shade, threw over this landscape a subdued reddish light, which increased the gloomy and startling effect of the whole. Adrienne, leaning forward from the box, with cheeks slightly flushed, sparkling eyes, and throbbing heart, sought to trace in this scene the solitary forest described by the traveller who had eulogized Djalma's generosity and courage, when he threw himself upon a ferocious tigress to save the life of a poor black slave. Chance coincided wonderfully indeed with her recollections. Absorbed in the contemplation of the scenery and the thoughts it awakened in her heart, she paid no attention to what was passing in the house. And yet something calculated to excite curiosity was taking place in the opposite stage-box.

The door of this box opened. A man about forty years of age, of a yellow complexion, entered; he was clothed after the East Indian fashion, in a long robe of orange silk, bound round the waist with a green sash, and he wore a small white turban. He placed two chairs at the front of the box; and, having glanced round the house for a moment, he started, his black eyes sparkled, and he went out quickly. That man was Faringhea. His apparition caused surprise and curiosity in the theatre; the majority of the spectators not having, like Adrienne, a thousand reasons for being absorbed in the contemplation of a picturesque set scene. The

public attention was still more excited when they saw the box which Faringhea had just left, entered by a youth of rare beauty, also dressed Oriental fashion, in a long robe of white Cashmere with flowing sleeves, with a scarlet turban striped with gold on his head, and a sash to correspond, in which was stuck a long dagger, glittering with precious stones. This young man was Prince Djalma. For an instant he remained standing at the door, and cast a look of indifference upon the immense theatre, crowded with people; then, stepping forward with a majestic and tranquil air, the prince seated himself negligently on one of the chairs, and, turning his head in a few moments towards the entrance, appeared surprised at not seeing some person whom he doubtless expected. This person appeared at length; the boxkeeper had been assisting her to take off her cloak. She was a charming, fair-haired girl, attired with more show than taste, in a dress of white silk, with broad cherry-colored stripes, made ultra-fashionably low, and with short sleeves: a large bow of cherry-colored ribbon was placed on each side of her light hair, and set off the prettiest, sprightliest, most wilful little face in the world.

It was Rose-Pompon. Her pretty arms were partly covered by long white gloves, and ridiculously loaded with bracelets; in her hand she carried an enormous bouquet of roses.

Far from imitating the calm demeanor of Djalma, Rose-Pompon skipped into the box, moved the chairs about noisily, and fidgeted on her seat for some time, to display her fine dress; then, without being in the least intimidated by the presence of the brilliant assembly, she, with a little coquettish air, held her bouquet towards Djalma, that he might smell it, and appeared finally to establish herself on her seat. Faringhea came in, shut the door of the box, and seated himself behind the prince. Adrienne, still completely absorbed in the contemplation of the Indian forest, and in her own sweet thoughts, had not observed the newcomers. As she was turning her head completely towards the stage, and Djalma could not, for the moment, see even her profile, he, on his side, had not recognized Mdlle. de Cardoville.

CHAPTER XIV.

DEATH.

The pantomime opening, by which was introduced the combat of Morok with the black panther, was so unmeaning, that the majority of the audience paid no attention to it, reserving all their interest for the scene in which the lion-tamer was to make his appearance.

This indifference of the public explains the curiosity excited in the theatre by the arrival of Faringhea and Djalma—a curiosity which expressed itself (as at this day, when uncommon foreigners appear in public) by a slight murmur and general movement amongst the crowd. The sprightly, pretty face of Rose-Pompon, always charming, in spite of her singularly staring dress, in style so ridiculous for such a theatre, and her light and familiar manner towards the handsome Indian who accompanied her, increased and animated the general surprise; for, at this moment, Rose-Pompon, yielding without reserve to a movement of teasing coquetry, had held up, as we have already stated, her large bunch of roses to Djalma. But the prince, at sight of the landscape which reminded him of his country, instead of appearing sensible to this pretty provocation, remained for some minutes as in a dream, with his eyes fixed upon the stage. Then Rose-Pompon began to beat time on the front of the box with her bouquet, whilst the somewhat too visible movement of her pretty shoulders showed that this devoted dancer was thinking of fast-life dances, as the orchestra struck up a more lively strain.

Placed directly opposite the box in which Faringhea, Djalma, and Rose-Pompon had just taken their seats, Lady Morinval soon perceived the arrival of these two personages, and particularly the eccentric coquetries of Rose-Pompon. Immediately, the young marchioness, leaning over towards Mdlle. de Cardoville, who was still absorbed in memories ineffable, said to her, laughing: "My dear, the most amusing part of the performance is not upon the stage. Look just opposite."

"Just opposite?" repeated Adrienne, mechanically: and, turning towards Lady Morinval with an air of surprise, she glanced in the direction pointed out.

She looked—what did she see?—Djalma seated by the

side of a young woman, who was familiarly offering to his sense of smell the perfume of her bouquet. Amazed, struck almost literally to the heart, as by an electric shock, swift, sharp, and painful, Adrienne became deadly pale. From instinct, she shut her eyes for a second, in order *not to see*—as men try to ward off the dagger, which, having once dealt the blow, threatens to strike again. Then suddenly, to this feeling of grief succeeded a reflection, terrible both to her love and to her wounded pride.

"Djalma is present with this woman, though he must have received my letter," she said to herself,—"wherein he was informed of the happiness that awaited him."

At the idea of so cruel an insult, a blush of shame and indignation displaced Adrienne's paleness, who, overwhelmed by this sad reality, said to herself: "Rodin did not deceive me."

We abandon all idea of picturing the lightning-like rapidity of certain emotions which in a moment may torture—may kill you in the space of a minute. Thus Adrienne was precipitated from the most radiant happiness to the lowest depths of an abyss of the most heart-rending grief, in less than a second; for a second had hardly elapsed before she replied to Lady Morinval: "What is there, then, so curious, opposite to us, my dear Julia?"

This evasive question gave Adrienne time to recover her self-possession. Fortunately, thanks to the thick folds of hair which almost entirely concealed her cheeks, the rapid and sudden changes from pallor to blush escaped the notice of Lady Morinval, who gayly replied: "What, my dear, do you not perceive those East Indians, who have just entered the box immediately opposite to ours? There, just before us!"

"Yes, I see them; but what then?" replied Adrienne, in a firm tone.

"And don't you observe anything remarkable?" said the marchioness.

"Don't be too hard, ladies," laughingly interposed the marquis; "we ought to allow the poor foreigners some little indulgence. They are ignorant of our manners and customs; were it not for that, they would never appear in the face of all Paris in such dubious company."

"Indeed," said Adrienne, with a bitter smile, "their simplicity is touching; we must pity them."

"And, unfortunately, the girl is charming, spite of her low dress and bare arms," said the marchioness; "she can-

not be more than sixteen or seventeen at most. Look at her, my dear Adrienne; what a pity!"

"It is one of your charitable days, my dear Julia," answered Adrienne; "we are to pity the Indians, to pity this creature, and—pray, whom else are we to pity?"

"We will not pity that handsome Indian, in his red-and-gold turban," said the marquis, laughing, "for, if this goes on, the girl with the cherry-colored ribbons will be giving him a kiss. See how she leans towards her sultan."

"They are very amusing," said the marchioness, sharing the hilarity of her husband, and looking at Rose-Pompon through her glass; then she resumed, in about a minute, addressing herself to Adrienne: "I am quite certain of one thing. Notwithstanding her giddy airs, that girl is very fond of her Indian. I just saw a look that expresses a great deal."

"Why so much penetration, my dear Julia?" said Adrienne, mildly; "what interest have we to read the heart of that girl?"

"Why, if she loves her sultan, she is quite in the right," said the marquis, looking through his opera-glass in turn; "for, in my whole life, I never saw a more handsome fellow than that Indian. I can only catch his side-face, but the profile is pure and fine as an antique cameo. Do you not think so?" added the marquis, leaning towards Adrienne. "Of course, it is only as a matter of art, that I permit myself to ask you the question."

"As a work of *art*," answered Adrienne, "it is certainly very fine."

"But see!" said the marchioness; "how impertinent the little creature is!—She is actually staring at us."

"Well!" said the marquis; "and she is actually laying her hand quite unceremoniously on her sultan's shoulder, to make him share, no doubt, in her admiration of you ladies."

In fact, Djalma, until now occupied with the contemplation of the scene which reminded him of his country, had remained insensible to the enticements of Rose-Pompon, and had not yet perceived Adrienne.

"Well, now!" said Rose-Pompon, bustling herself about in front of the box, and continuing to stare at Mdlle. de Cardoville, for it was she, and not the marchioness, who now drew her attention; "that is something quite out of the common way—a pretty woman, with red hair; but such sweet red, it must be owned. Look, Prince Charming!"

And so saying, she tapped Djalma lightly on the shoulder; he started at these words, turned round, and for the first time perceived Mdlle. de Cardoville.

Though he had been almost prepared for this meeting, the prince was so violently affected by it, that he was about involuntarily to rise, in a state of the utmost confusion; but he felt the iron hand of Faringhea laid heavily on his shoulder, and heard him whisper in Hindostanee: "Courage! and by to-morrow she will be at your feet."

As Djalma still struggled to rise, the half-caste added to restrain him: "Just now, she grew pale and red with jealousy. No weakness, or all is lost!"

"So! there you are again, talking your dreadful gibberish," said Rose-Pompon, turning round towards Faringhea. "First of all, it is not polite; and then the language is so odd, that one might suppose you were cracking nuts."

"I spoke of you to my master," said the half-caste; "he is preparing a surprise for you."

"A surprise? oh! that is different. Only make haste—do you hear, Prince Charming!" added she, looking tenderly at Djalma.

"My heart is breaking," said Djalma, in a hollow voice to Faringhea, still using the language of India.

"But to-morrow it will bound with joy and love," answered the half-caste. "It is only by disdain that you can conquer a proud woman. To-morrow, I tell you, she will be trembling, confused, supplicating, at your feet!"

"To-morrow, she will hate me like death!" replied the prince, mournfully.

"Yes, were she now to see you weak and cowardly. It is now too late to draw back; look full at her, take the nosegay from this girl, and raise it to your lips. Instantly, you will see yonder woman, proud as she is, grow pale and red, as just now. Then will you believe me?"

Reduced by despair to make almost any attempt, and fascinated, in spite of himself, by the diabolical hints of Faringhea, Djalma looked for a second full at Mdlle. de Cardoville; then, with a trembling hand he took the bouquet from Rose-Pompon, and, again looking at Adrienne, pressed it to his lips.

Upon this insolent bravado, Mdlle de Cardoville could not restrain so sudden and visible a pang, that the prince was struck by it.

"She is yours," said the half-caste, to him. "Did you see, my lord, how she trembled with jealousy? Only have

courage! and she is yours. She will soon prefer you to that handsome young man behind her—for *it is he* whom she has hitherto fancied herself in love with."

As if the half-caste had guessed the movement of rage and hatred, which this revelation would excite in the heart of the prince, he hastily added: "Calmness and disdain! Is it not his turn now to hate you?"

The prince restrained himself, and drew his hand across his forehead which glowed with anger.

"There now! what are you telling him, that vexes him so?" said Rose Pompon to Faringhea, with pouting lip. Then, addressing Djalma, she continued: "Come, Prince Charming, as they say in the fairy-tale, give me back my flowers."

As she took it again, she added: "You have kissed it, and I could almost eat it." Then, with a sigh, and a passionate glance at Djalma, she said softly to herself: "That monster Ninny Moulin did not deceive me. All this is *quite proper;* I have not even *that* to reproach myself with." And with her little white teeth, she bit at a rosy nail of her right hand, from which she had just drawn the glove.

It is hardly necessary to say, that Adrienne's letter had not been delivered to the prince, and that he had not gone to pass the day in the country with Marshal Simon. During the three days in which Montbron had not seen Djalma, Faringhea had persuaded him, that, by affecting another passion, he would bring Mdlle. de Cardoville to terms. With regard to Djalma's presence at the theatre, Rodin had learned from her maid, Florine, that her mistress was to go in the evening to the Porte-Saint-Martin. Before Djalma had recognized her, Adrienne, who felt her strength failing her, was on the point of quitting the theatre; the man, whom she had hitherto placed so high, whom she had regarded as a hero and a demi-god and whom she had imagined plunged in such dreadful despair, that, led by the most tender pity, she had written to him with simple frankness, that a sweet hope might calm his grief—replied to a generous mark of sincerity and love, by making himself a ridiculous spectacle with a creature unworthy of him. What incurable wounds for Adrienne's pride! It mattered little, whether Djalma knew or not, that she would be a spectator of the indignity. But when she saw herself recognized by the prince, when he carried the insult so far as to look full at her, and, at the same time, raise to his lips the creature's bouquet who accompanied him, Adrienne was

seized with noble indignation, and felt sufficient courage to remain: instead of closing her eyes to evidence, she found a sort of barbarous pleasure in assisting at the agony and death of her pure and divine love. With head erect, proud and flashing eye, flushed cheek, and curling lip, she looked in her turn at the prince with disdainful steadiness. It was with a sardonic smile that she said to the marchioness, who, like many others of the spectators, was occupied with what was passing in the stage-box: "This revolting exhibition of savage manners is at least in accordance with the rest of the performance."

"Certainly," said the marchioness; "and my dear uncle will have lost, perhaps, the most amusing part."

"Montbron?" said Adrienne, hastily, with hardly repressed bitterness; "yes, he will regret not having *seen all.* I am impatient for his arrival. Is it not to him that I am indebted for this charming evening?"

Perhaps Madame de Morinval would have remarked the expression of bitter irony, that Adrienne could not altogether dissemble, if suddenly a hoarse and prolonged roar had not attracted her attention, as well as that of the rest of the audience, who had hitherto been quite indifferent to the scenes intended for an introduction to the appearance of Morok. Every eye was now turned instinctively towards the cavern, situated to the left of the stage, just below Mdlle. de Cardoville's box; a thrill of curiosity ran through the house. A second roar, deeper and more sonorous, and apparently expressive of more irritation than the first, now rose from the cave, the mouth of which was half-hidden by artificial brambles, made so as to be easily put on one side. At this sound, the Englishman stood up in his little box, leaned half over the front, and began to rub his hands with great energy; then, remaining perfectly motionless, he fixed his large, green, glittering eyes on the mouth of the cavern.

At these ferocious howlings, Djalma also had started, notwithstanding the frenzy of love, hate, and jealousy, to which he was a prey. The sight of this forest, and the roarings of the panther, filled him with deep emotion, for they recalled the remembrance of his country, and of those great hunts which, like war, have their own terrible excitement. Had he suddenly heard the horns and gongs of his father's army sounding to the charge, he could not have been transported with more savage ardor. And now deep growls, like distant thunder, almost drowned the roar of

the panther. The lion and tiger, Judas and Cain answered her from their dens at the back of the stage. On this frightful concert, with which his ears had been familiar in the midst of the solitudes of India, when he lay encamped, for the purposes of the chase or of war, Djalma's blood boiled in his veins. His eyes sparkled with a wild ardor. Leaning a little forward, with both hands pressed on the front of the box, his whole body trembled with a convulsive shudder. The audience, the theatre, Adrienne herself no longer existed for him; he was in a forest of his own lands, tracking the tiger.

Then there mingled with his beauty so intrepid and ferocious an expression, that Rose Pompon looked at him with a sort of terror and passionate admiration. For the first time in her life, perhaps, her pretty blue eyes, generally so gay and mischievous, expressed a serious emotion. She could not explain what she felt; but her heart seemed frightened, and beat violently, as though some calamity were at hand.

Yielding to a movement of involuntary fear, she seized Djalma by the arm, and said to him: "Do not stare so into that cavern; you frighten me."

Djalma did not hear what she said.

"Here he is! here he is!" murmured the crowd, almost with one voice, as Morok appeared at the back of the stage.

Dressed as we have described, Morôk now carried in addition a bow and a long quiver full of arrows. He slowly descended the line of painted rocks, which came sloping down towards the centre of the stage. From time to time, he stopped as if to listen, and appeared to advance with caution. Looking from one side to the other, his eyes involuntarily encountered the large, green eyes of the Englishman, whose box was close to the cavern. Instantly the lion-tamer's countenance was contracted in so frightful a manner, that Lady Morinval, who was examining him closely with the aid of an excellent glass, said hastily to Adrienne: "My dear, the man is afraid. Some misfortune will happen."

"How can accidents happen," said Adrienne, with a sardonic smile, "in the midst of this brilliant crowd, so well dressed and full of animation! Misfortunes here, this evening! why, dear Julia, you do not think it. It is in darkness and solitude that misfortunes come—never in the midst of a joyous crowd, and in all this blaze of light."

"Good gracious, Adrienne! take care!" cried the mar-

chioness, unable to repress an exclamation of alarm, and seizing her arm, as if to draw her closer; "do you not see it?" And, with a trembling hand, she pointed to the cavern's mouth. Adrienne hastily bent forward, and looked in that direction. "Take care do not lean so forward!" exclaimed Lady Morinval.

"Your terrors are nonsensical, my dear," said the marquis to his wife. "The panther is securely chained; and even were it to break its chain (which is impossible), we are here beyond its reach."

A long murmur of trembling curiosity here ran through the house, and every eye was intently fixed on the cavern. From amongst the artificial brambles, which she abruptly pushed aside with her broad chest, the black panther suddenly appeared. Twice she stretched forth her flat head, illumined by yellow, flaming eyes; then, half-opening her blood-red jaws, she uttered another roar, and exhibited two rows of formidable fangs. A double iron chain, and a collar also of iron, painted black, blended with the ebon shades of her hide, and with the darkness of the cavern. The illusion was complete, and the terrible animal seemed to be at liberty in her den.

"Ladies," said the marquis, suddenly, "look at those Indians. Their emotion makes them superb!"

In fact, the sight of the panther had raised the wild ardor of Djalma to its utmost pitch. His eyes sparkled in their pearly orbits like two black diamonds; his upper lip was curled convulsively with an expression of animal ferocity, as if he were in a violent paroxysm of rage.

Faringhea, now leaning on the front of the box, was also greatly excited, by reason of a strange coincidence. "That black panther of so rare a breed," thought he, "which I see here at Paris, upon the stage, must be the very one that the Malay"—the Thug who had tattooed Djalma at Java during his sleep—"took quite young from his den, and sold to a European captain. Bowanee's power is everywhere!" added the Thug, in his sanguinary superstition.

"Do you not think," resumed the marquis, addressing Adrienne, "that those Indians are really splendid in their present attitude?"

"Perhaps they may have seen such a hunt in their own country," said Adrienne, as if she would recall and brave the most cruel remembrances.

"Adrienne," said the marchioness, suddenly, in an agitated

voice, "the lion-tamer has now come nearer—is not his countenance fearful to look at?—I tell you he is afraid."

"In truth," observed the marquis, this time very seriously, "he is dreadfully pale, and seems to grow worse every minute, the nearer he approaches this side. It is said that, were he to lose his presence of mind for a single moment, he would run the greatest danger."

"O! it would be horrible!" cried the marchioness, addressing Adrienne, "if he were wounded—there—under our eyes!"

"Every wound does not kill," replied her friend, with an accent of such cold indifference, that the marchioness looked at her with surprise, and said to her: "My dear girl, what you say there is cruel!"

"It is the air of the place that acts on me," answered Adrienne, with an icy smile.

"Look! look! the lion-tamer is about to shoot his arrow at the panther," said the marquis, suddenly. "No doubt, he will next perform the hand to hand grapple."

Morok was at this moment in front of the stage, but he had yet to traverse its entire breadth to reach the cavern's mouth. He stopped an instant, adjusted an arrow to the string, knelt down behind a mass of rock, took deliberate aim—and then the arrow hissed across the stage, and was lost in the depths of the cavern, into which the panther had retired, after showing for a moment her threatening head to the audience. Hardly had the arrow disappeared, than Death, purposely irritated by Goliath (who was invisible) sent forth a howl of rage, as if she had been really wounded. Morok's actions became so expressive, he evinced so naturally his joy at having hit the wild beast, that a tempest of applause burst from every quarter of the house. Then, throwing away his bow, he drew a dagger from his girdle, took it between his teeth, and began to crawl forward on hands and knees, as though he meant to surprise the wounded panther in his den. To render the illusion perfect, Death, again excited by Goliath, who struck him with an iron bar, sent forth frightful howlings from the depths of the cavern.

The gloomy aspect of the forest, only half-lighted with a reddish glare, was so effective—the howlings of the panther were so furious—the gestures, attitude, and countenance of Morok were so expressive of terror, that the audience, attentive and trembling, now maintained a profound silence. Every one held his breath, and a kind of shudder came over the spectators, as though they expected some horrible event.

What gave such a fearful air of truth to the pantomime of Morok, was that, as he approached the cavern step by step, he approached also the Englishman's box. In spite of himself, the lion-tamer, fascinated by terror, could not take his eyes from the large green eyes of this man, and it seemed as if every one of the abrupt movements which he made in crawling along, was produced by a species of magnetic attraction, caused by the fixed gaze of the fatal wagerer. Therefore, the nearer Morok approached, the more ghastly and livid he became. At sight of this pantomime, which was no longer acting, but the real expression of intense fear, the deep and trembling silence which had reigned in the theatre was once more interrupted by acclamations, with which were mingled the roarings of the panther, and the distant growls of the lion and tiger.

The Englishman leaned almost out of his box, with a frightful sardonic smile on his lip, and with his large eyes still fixed, panted for breath. The perspiration ran down his bald red forehead, as if he had really expended an incredible amount of magnetic power in attracting Morok, whom he now saw close to the cavern entrance. The moment was decisive. Crouching down with his dagger in his hand, following with eye and gesture Death's every movement, who, roaring furiously, and opening wide her enormous jaws, seemed determined to guard the entrance of her den, Morok waited for the moment to rush upon her. There is such fascination in danger, that Adrienne shared, in spite of herself, the feeling of painful curiosity, mixed with terror, that thrilled through all the spectators. Leaning forward like the marchioness, and gazing upon this scene of fearful interest, the lady still held mechanically in her hand the Indian bouquet preserved since the morning. Suddenly, Morok raised a wild shout, as he rushed towards Death, who answered this exclamation by a dreadful roar, and threw herself upon her master with so much fury, that Adrienne, in alarm, believing the man lost, drew herself back, and covered her face with her hands. Her flowers slipped from her grasp, and, falling upon the stage, rolled into the cavern in which Morok was struggling with the panther.

Quick as lightning, supple and agile as a tiger, yielding to the intoxication of his love, and to the wild ardor excited in him by the roaring of the panther, Djalma sprang at one bound upon the stage, drew his dagger, and rushed into the cavern to recover Adrienne's nosegay. At that instant, Morok, being wounded, uttered a dreadful cry for help; th

panther, rendered still more furious at sight of Djalma, made the most desperate efforts to break her chain. Unable to succeed in doing so, she rose upon her hind legs, in order to seize Djalma, then within reach of her sharp claws. It was only by bending down his head, throwing himself on his knees, and twice plunging his dagger into her belly with the rapidity of lightning, that Djalma escaped certain death. The panther gave a howl, and fell with her whole weight upon the prince. For a second, during which lasted her terrible agony, nothing was seen but a confused and convulsive mass of black limbs, and white garments stained with blood—and then Djalma rose, pale, bleeding, for he was wounded—and standing erect, his eye flashing with savage pride, his foot on the body of the panther, he held in his hand Adrienne's bouquet, and cast towards her a glance which told the intensity of his love. Then only did Adrienne feel her strength fail her—for only superhuman courage had enabled her to watch all the terrible incidents of the struggle.

CHAPTER XV.

THE CONSTANT WANDERER.

It is night. The moon shines and the stars glimmer in the midst of a serene but cheerless sky; the sharp whistlings of the north wind, that fatal, dry, and icy breeze, ever and anon burst forth in violent gusts. With its harsh and cutting breath, it sweeps Montmartre's Heights. On the highest point of the hills, a man is standing. His long shadow is cast upon the stony, moon-lit ground. He gazes on the immense city, which lies outspread beneath his feet. Paris—with the dark outline of its towers, cupolas, domes, and steeples, standing out from the limpid blue of the horizon, while from the midst of the ocean of masonry, rises a luminous vapor, that reddens the starry azure of the sky. It is the distant reflection of the thousand fires, which at night, the hour of pleasures, light up so joyously the noisy capital.

"No," said the wayfarer; "it is not to be. The Lord will not exact it. Is not *twice* enough?

"Five centuries ago, the avenging hand of the Almighty drove me hither from the uttermost confines of Asia. A solitary traveller, I had left behind me more grief, despair, disaster, and death, than the innumerable armies of a

hundred devastating conquerors. I entered this town, and it too was decimated.

"Again, two centuries ago, the inexorable hand, which leads me through the world, brought me once more hither; and then, as the time before, the plague, which the Almighty attaches to my steps, again ravaged this city, and fell first on my brethren, already worn out with labor and misery.

"My brethren—mine?—the cobbler of Jerusalem, the artisan accursed by the Lord, who, in my person, condemned the whole race of workmen, ever suffering, ever disinherited, ever in slavery, toiling on like me without rest or pause, without recompense or hope, till men, women, and children, young and old, all die beneath the same iron yoke—that murderous yoke, which others take in their turn, thus to be borne from age to age on the submissive and bruised shoulders of the masses.

"And now, for the third time in five centuries, I reach the summit of one of the hills that overlook the city. And perhaps I again bring with me fear, desolation, and death.

"Yet this city, intoxicated with the sounds of its joys and its nocturnal revelries, does not know—oh! does not know that *I* am at its gates.

"But no, no! my presence will not be a new calamity. The Lord, in his impenetrable views, has hitherto led me through France, so as to avoid the humblest hamlet; and the sound of the funeral knell has not accompanied my passage.

"And, moreover, the spectre has left me—the green, livid spectre, with its hollow, bloodshot eyes. When I touched the soil of France, its damp and icy hand was no longer clasped in mine—and it disappeared.

"And yet—I feel that the atmosphere of death is around me.

"The sharp whistlings of that fatal wind cease not, which, catching me in their whirl, seem to propagate blasting and mildew as they blow.

"But perhaps the wrath of the Lord is appeased, and my presence here is only a threat—to be communicated in some way to those whom it should intimidate.

"Yes; for otherwise he would smite with a fearful blow, by first scattering terror and death here in the heart of the country, in the bosom of this immense city!

"Oh! no, no! the Lord will be merciful. No! he will not condemn me to this new torture.

"Alas! in this city, my brethren are more numerous and

miserable than elsewhere. And should I be their messenger of death?"

"No! the Lord will have pity. For, alas! the seven descendants of my sister have at length met in this town. And to them likewise should I be the messenger of death, instead of the help they so much need?

"For that woman, who like me wanders from one border of the earth to the other, after having once more rent asunder the nets of their enemies, has gone forth upon her endless journey.

"In vain she foresaw that new misfortunes threatened my sister's family. The invisible hand, that drives me on, drives *her* on also.

"Carried away, as of old, by the irresistible whirlwind, at the moment of leaving my kindred to their fate, she in vain cried with supplicating tone: 'Let me at least, O Lord, complete my task!'—'Go on!'—'A few days, in mercy, only a few poor days!'—'Go on'—'I leave those I love on the brink of the abyss!'—'Go on! Go on!'

"And the wandering star again started on its eternal round. And her voice, passing through space, called me to the assistance of mine own.

"When that voice reached me, I knew that the descendants of my sister were still exposed to frightful perils. Those perils are even now on the increase.

"Tell me, O Lord! will they escape the scourge, which for so many centuries has weighed down our race?

"Wilt thou pardon me in them? wilt thou punish me in them? Oh, that they might obey the last will of their ancestor!

"Oh, that they might join together their charitable hearts, their valor and their strength, their noble intelligence, and their great riches!

"They would then labor for the future happiness of humanity—they would thus, perhaps, redeem me from my eternal punishment!

"The words of the Son of Man, Love ye one another, will be their only end, their only means.

"By the help of those all-powerful words, they will fight and conquer the false priests, who have renounced the precepts of love, peace, and hope, for lessons of hatred, violence, and despair.

"Those false priests, who, kept in pay by the powerful and happy of this world, their accomplices in every age instead of asking here below for some slight share of well-

being for my unfortunate brethren, dare in thy name, O Lord God, to assert that the poor are condemned to endless suffering in this world—and that the desire or the hope to suffer less is a crime in thine eyes—because the happiness of the few, and the misery of nearly the whole human race, is (O blasphemy!) according to thy will. Is not the very contrary of those murderous words alone worthy of divinity!

"In mercy, hear me, Lord! Rescue from their enemies the descendants of my sister—the artisan as the king's son. Do not let them destroy the germ of so mighty and fruitful an association, which, with thy blessing, would make an epoch in the annals of human happiness!

"Let me unite them, O Lord, since others would divide them—defend them, since others attack; let me give hope to those who have ceased to hope, courage to those who are brought low with fear—let me raise up the falling, and sustain those who persevere in the way of the righteous!

"And, peradventure, their struggles devotion, virtue, and grief, may expiate my fault—that of a man, whom misfortune alone rendered unjust and wicked.

"Oh! since thy Almighty hand hath led me hither—to what end I know not—lay aside Thy wrath, I beseech Thee—let me be no longer the instrument of Thy vengeance!

"Enough of woe upon the earth! for the last two years, Thy creatures have fallen by thousands upon my track. The world is decimated. A veil of mourning extends over all the globe.

"From Asia to the icy Pole, they died upon the path of the wanderer. Dost Thou not hear the long-drawn sigh that rises from the earth unto Thee, O Lord?

"Mercy for all! mercy for me!—Let me but unite the descendants of my sister for a single day, and they will be saved!"

As he pronounced these words, the wayfarer sank upon his knees, and raised to heaven his supplicating hands. Suddenly, the wind blew with redoubled violence; its sharp whistlings were changed into the roar of a tempest.

The traveller shuddered; in a voice of terror he exclaimed: "The blast of death rises in its fury—the whirlwind carries me on—Lord! thou art then deaf to my prayer?

"The spectre! oh, the spectre! it is again here! its green face twitching with convulsive spasms—its red eyes rolling in their orbits. Begone! begone!—its hand, oh! its icy hand has again laid hold of mine. Have mercy, heaven!"

"Go on!"

"Oh, Lord! the pestilence—the terrible plague—must I carry it into this city?—And my brethren will perish the first—they, who are so sorely smitten even now! Mercy!"

"Go on!"

"And the descendants of my sister. Mercy! Mercy!"

"Go on!"

"Oh, Lord, have pity!—I can no longer keep my ground; the spectre drags me to the slope of the hill; my walk is rapid as the deadly blast that rages behind me; already do I behold the city gates. Have mercy, Lord, on the descendants of my sister! Spare them; do not make me their executioner; let them triumph over their enemies!"

"Go on! Go on!"

"The ground flies beneath my feet; there is the city gate. Lord, it is yet time! Oh, mercy for that sleeping town! Let it not waken to cries of terror, despair, and death! Lord, I am on the threshold. Must it be?—Yes, it is done. Paris, the plague is in thy bosom. The curse—oh, the eternal curse!"

"Go on! Go on! Go on!"

CHAPTER XVI.

THE LUNCHEON.

The morning after the doomed traveller, descending the heights of Montmartre, had entered the walls of Paris, great activity reigned in St. Dizier House. Though it was hardly noon, the Princess de St. Dizier, without being exactly in full dress (she had too much taste for that), was yet arrayed with more care than usual. Her light hair, instead of being merely banded, was arranged in two bunches of curls, which suited very well with her full and florid cheeks. Her cap was trimmed with bright rose-colored ribbon, and whoever had seen the lady in her tight-fitting dress of gray-watered silk would have easily guessed that Mrs. Grivois, her tire-woman, must have required the assistance and the efforts of another of the princess's women to achieve so remarkable a reduction in the ample figure of their mistress.

We shall explain the edifying cause of this partial return to the vanities of the world. The princess, attended by Mrs. Grivois, who acted as housekeeper, was giving her

final orders with regard to some preparations that were going on in a vast parlor. In the midst of this room was a large round table, covered with crimson velvet, and near it stood several chairs, amongst which, in the place of honor, was an arm-chair of gilded wood. In one corner, not far from the chimney, in which burned an excellent fire, was a buffet. On it were the divers materials for a most dainty and exquisite collation. Upon silver dishes were piled pyramids of sandwiches, composed of the roes of carp and anchovy paste, with slices of pickled tunny-fish and Lenigord truffles (it was in Lent); on silver dishes, placed over burning spirits of wine, so as to keep them very hot, tails of Meuse crawfish boiled in cream, smoked in golden-colored pastry, and seemed to challenge comparison with delicious little Marennes oyster-patties, stewed in Madeira, and flavored with a seasoning of spiced sturgeon. By the side of these substantial dishes were some of a lighter character, such as pineapple tarts, strawberry-creams (it was early for such fruit), and orange-jelly served in the peel, which had been artistically emptied for that purpose. Bordeaux, Madeira, and Alicant sparkled like rubies and topazes in large glass decanters, while two Sèvres ewers were filled, one with coffee *à la crême*, the other with vanilla chocolate, almost in the state of sherbet, from being plunged in a large cooler of chiselled silver, containing ice.

But what gave to this dainty collation a singularly apostolic and papal character were sundry symbols of religious worship carefully represented. Thus there were charming little Calvaries in apricot paste, sacerdotal mitres in burnt almonds, episcopal croziers in sweet cake, to which the princess added, as a mark of delicate attention, a little cardinal's hat in cherry sweetmeat, ornamented with bands in burnt sugar. The most important, however, of these Catholic delicacies, the masterpiece of the cook, was a superb crucifix in angelica, with a crown of candied berries. These are strange profanations, which scandalize even the least devout. But, from the impudent juggle of the coat of Triers, down to the shameless jest of the shrine at Argenteuil, people, who are pious after the fashion of the princess, seem to take delight in bringing ridicule upon the most respectable traditions.

After glancing with an air of satisfaction at these preparations for the collation, the lady said to Mrs. Grivois, as she pointed to the gilded arm-chair, which seemed destined for the president of the meeting: "Is there a cushion under the

table, for his Eminence to rest his feet on? He always complains of cold."

"Yes, your highness," said Mrs. Grivois, when she had looked under the table; "the cushion is there."

"Let also a pewter bottle be filled with boiling water, in case his Eminence should not find the cushion enough to keep his feet warm."

"Yes, my lady."

"And put some more wood on the fire."

"But, my lady, it is already a very furnace. And if his Eminence is always too cold, my lord the Bishop of Halfagen is always too hot. He perspires dreadfully."

The princess shrugged her shoulders, and said to Mrs. Grivois: "Is not his Eminence Cardinal Malipieri the superior of his Lordship the Bishop of Halfagen?"

"Yes, your highness."

"Then, according to the rules of the hierarchy, it is for his Lordship to suffer from the heat, rather than his Eminence from the cold. Therefore, do as I tell you, and put more wood on the fire. Nothing is more natural; his Eminence being an Italian, and his Lordship coming from the north of Belgium, they are accustomed to different temperatures."

"Just as your highness pleases," said Mrs. Grivois, as she placed two enormous logs on the fire; "but in such a heat as there is here his Lordship might really be suffocated."

"I also find it too warm; but does not our holy religion teach us lessons of self-sacrifice and mortification?" said the princess, with a touching expression of devotion.

We have now explained the cause of the rather gay attire of the princess. She was preparing for a reception of prelates, who, along with Father d'Aigrigny and other dignitaries of the Church, had already held at the princely house a sort of council on a small scale. A young bride who gives her first ball, an emancipated minor who gives his first bachelor's dinner, a woman of talent who reads aloud for the first time her first unpublished work, are not more joyous and proud, and, at the same time, more attentive to their guests, than was this lady with her prelates. To behold great interests discussed in her house, and in her presence, to hear men of acknowledged ability ask her advice upon certain practical matters relating to the influence of female congregations, filled the princess with pride, as her claims to consideration were thus sanctioned by Lordships and Eminences, and she took the position, as it were,

of a mother of the Church. Therefore, to win these prelates, whether native or foreign, she had recourse to no end of saintly flatteries and sanctified coaxing. Nor could anything be more logical than these successive transfigurations of this heartless woman, who only loved sincerely and passionately the pursuit of intrigue and domination. With the progress of age, she passed naturally from the intrigues of love to those of politics, and from the latter to those of religion.

At the moment she finished inspecting her preparations, the sound of coaches was heard in the courtyard, apprising her of the arrival of the persons she had been expecting. Doubtless, these persons were of the highest rank, for, contrary to all custom, she went to receive them at the door of her outer saloon. It was, indeed, Cardinal Malipieri, who was always cold, with the Belgian Bishop of Halfagen, who was always hot. They were accompanied by Father d'Aigrigny. The Roman cardinal was a tall man, rather bony than thin, with a yellowish puffy countenance, haughty and full of craft; he squinted a good deal, and his black eyes were surrounded by a deep brown circle. The Belgian Bishop was short, thick, and fat, with a prominent abdomen, an apopletic complexion, a slow, deliberate look, and a soft, dimpled, delicate hand.

The company soon assembled in the great saloon. The cardinal instantly crept close to the fire, whilst the bishop, beginning to sweat and blow, cast longing glances at the iced chocolate and coffee, which were to aid him in sustaining the oppressive heat of the artificial dog-day. Father d'Aigrigny, approaching the princess, said to her in a low voice: "Will you give orders for the admittance of Abbé Gabriel de Rennepont, when he arrives?"

"Is that young priest then here?" asked the princess, with extreme surprise.

"Since the day before yesterday. We had him sent for to Paris, by his superiors. You shall know all. As for Father Rodin, let Mrs. Grivois admit him, as the other day, by the little door of the back stairs."

"He will come to-day."

"He has very important matters to communicate. He desired that both the cardinal and the bishop should be present for they have been informed of everything at Rome by the Superior General, in their quality of associates."

The princess rang the bell, gave the necessary orders, and, returning towards the cardinal, said to him, in a tone of the

most earnest solicitude: "Does your Eminence begin to feel a little warmer? Would your Eminence like a bottle of hot water to your feet? Shall we make a larger fire for your Eminence?"

At this proposition, the Belgian bishop, who was wiping the perspiration from his forehead, heaved a despairing sigh.

"A thousand thanks, princess," answered the cardinal to her, in very good French, but with an intolerable Italian accent; "I am really overcome with so much kindness."

"Will not your Lordship take some refreshment?" said the princess to the bishop, as she turned towards the sideboard.

"With your permission, madame, I will take a little iced coffee," said the prelate, making a prudent circuit to approach the dishes without passing before the fire.

"And will not your Eminence try one of these little oyster-patties? They are quite hot," said the princess.

"I know them already, princess," said the cardinal, with the air and look of an epicure; "they are delicious, and I cannot resist the temptation."

"What wine shall I have the honor to offer your Eminence?" resumed the princess, graciously.

"A little claret, if you please, madame;" and as Father d'Aigrigny prepared to fill the cardinal's glass, the princess disputed with him that pleasure.

"Your Eminence will doubtless approve what I have done," said Father d'Aigrigny to the cardinal, whilst the latter was gravely despatching the oyster-patties, "in not summoning for to-day the Bishop of Mogador, the Archbishop of Nanterre, and our holy Mother Perpétue, the lady-superior of St. Marie Convent, the interview we are about to have with his Reverence Father Rodin and Abbé Gabriel being altogether private and confidential."

"Our good father was perfectly right," said the cardinal; "for, though the possible consequences of this Rennepont affair may interest the whole Church, there are some things that are as well kept secret."

"Then I must seize this opportunity to thank your Eminence for having deigned to make an exception in favor of a very obscure and humble servant of the Church," said the princess to the cardinal, with a very deep and respectful curtsey.

"It is only just and right, madame," replied the cardinal, bowing as he replaced his empty glass upon the table; "we

know how much the Church is indebted to you for the salutary direction you give to the religious institutions of which you are the patroness."

"With regard to that, your Eminence may be assured that I always refuse assistance to any poor person who cannot produce a certificate from the confessional."

"And it is only thus, madame," resumed the cardinal, this time allowing himself to be tempted by the attractions of the crawfish's tails, "it is only thus that charity has any meaning. I care little that the irreligious should feel hunger, but with the pious it is different;" and the prelate gayly swallowed a mouthful. "Moreover," resumed he, "it is well known with what ardent zeal you pursue the impious, and those who are rebels against the authority of our Holy Father."

"Your Eminence may feel convinced that I am *Roman* in heart and soul; I see no difference between a Gallican and a Turk," said the princess, bravely.

"The princess is right," said the Belgian bishop: "I will go further, and assert that a Gallican should be more odious to the church than a pagan. In this respect I am of the opinion of Louis XIV. They asked him a favor for a man about the court. 'Never,' said the great king; 'this person is a Jansenist.'—'No, sire; he is an atheist.' —'Oh! that is different; I will grant what he asks,' said the king."

This little episcopal jest made them all laugh. After which Father d'Aigrigny resumed seriously, addressing the cardinal: "Unfortunately, as I was about to observe to your Eminence with regard to the Abbé Gabriel, unless they are very narrowly watched, the lower clergy have a tendency to become infected with dissenting views, and with ideas of rebellion against what they call the despotism of the bishops."

"This young man must be a Catholic Luther!" said the bishop. And, walking on tip-toe, he went to pour himself out a glorious glass of Madeira, in which he soaked some sweet cake, made in the form of a crozier.

Led by his example, the Cardinal, under pretence of warming his feet by drawing still closer to the fire, helped himself to an excellent glass of old Malaga, which he swallowed by mouthfuls, with an air of profound meditation; after which he resumed: "So this Abbé Gabriel starts as a reformer. He must be an ambitious man. Is he dangerous?"

"By our advice his superiors have judged him to be so. They have ordered him to come hither. He will soon be here, and I will tell your Eminence why I have sent for him. But first, I have a note on the dangerous tendencies of the Abbé Gabriel. Certain questions were addressed to him, with regard to some of his acts, and it was in consequence of his answers that his superiors recalled him."

So saying, Father d'Aigrigny, took from his pocket-book a paper, which he read as follows:

"'*Question.*—Is it true that you performed religious rites for an inhabitant of your parish who died in final impenitence of the most detestable kind, since he had committed suicide?

"'*Answer of Abbé Gabriel.*—I paid him the last duties, because, more than any one else, because of his guilty end, he required the prayers of the church. During the night which followed his interment I continually implored for him the divine mercy.

"'*Q.*—Is it true that you refused a set of silver-gilt sacramental vessels, and other ornaments, with which one of the faithful, in pious zeal, wished to endow your parish?

"'*A.*—I refused the vessels and embellishments, because the house of the Lord should be plain and without ornament, so as to remind the faithful that the divine Saviour was born in a stable. I advised the person who wished to make these useless presents to my parish to employ the money in judicious almsgiving, assuring him it would be more agreeable to the Lord.'"

"What a bitter and violent declamation against the adorning of our temples!" cried the cardinal. "This young priest is most dangerous. Continue, my good father."

And, in his indignation, his Eminence swallowed several mouthfuls of strawberry-cream. Father d'Aigrigny continued.

"'*Q.*—Is it true that you received in your parsonage, and kept there for some days, an inhabitant of the village, by birth a Swiss, belonging to the Protestant communion? Is it true that not only you did not attempt to convert him to the one Catholic and Apostolic faith, but that you carried so far the neglect of your sacred duties as to inter this heretic in the ground consecrated for the repose of true believers?

"'*A.*—One of my brethren was houseless. His life had been honest and laborious. In his old age his strength had failed him, and sickness had come at the back of it; almost in a dying state, he had been driven from his humble dwelling by a pitiless landlord, to whom he owed a year's rent. I received the old man in my house, and soothed his last days. The poor creature had toiled and suffered all his life; dying, he uttered no word of bitterness at his hard fate; he recommended his soul to God, and piously kissed the crucifix. His pure and simple spirit returned to the bosom of its Creator. I closed his eyes with respect, I buried him, I prayed for him; and, though he died in the Protestant faith, I thought him worthy of a place in consecrated ground.'"

"Worse and worse!" said the cardinal. "This tolerance is monstrous. It is a horrible attack on that maxim of

Catholicism: 'Out of the pale of the Church there is no salvation.'"

"And all this is the more serious, my lord," resumed Father d'Aigrigny, "because the mildness, charity, and Christian devotion of Abbé Gabriel have excited, not only in his parish, but in all the surrounding districts, the greatest enthusiasm. The priests of the neighboring parishes have yielded to the general impulse, and it must be confessed that but for his moderation a wide-spread schism would have commenced."

"But what do you hope will result from bringing him here?" said the prelate.

"The position of Abbé Gabriel is complicated; first of all, he is the heir of the Rennepont family."

"But has he not ceded his rights?" asked the cardinal.

"Yes, my lord; and this cession, which was at first informal, has lately, with his free consent, been made perfectly regular in law; for he had sworn, happen what might, to renounce his part of the inheritance in favor of the Society of Jesus. Nevertheless, his Reverence Father Rodin thinks, that if your Eminence, after explaining to Abbé Gabriel that he was about to be recalled by his superiors, were to propose to him some eminent position at Rome, he might be induced to leave France, and we might succeed in arousing within him those sentiments of ambition which are doubtless only sleeping for the present; your Eminence, having observed, very judiciously, that every reformer must be ambitious."

"I approve of this idea," said the cardinal, after a moment's reflection; "with his merit and power of acting on other men, Abbé Gabriel may rise very high, if he is docile; and if he should not be so, it is better for the safety of the Church that he should be at Rome than here—for you know, my good father, we have securities that are unfortunately wanting in France." *

After some moments of silence, the cardinal said suddenly to Father d'Aigrigny: "As we were talking of Father Rodin, tell me frankly what you think of him."

"Your Eminence knows his capacity," said Father d'Aigrigny, with a constrained and suspicious air; "our reverend Father-General——"

"Commissioned him to take your place," said the cardinal; "I know that. He told me so at Rome. But what

* It is known that, in 1845, the Inquisition, solitary confinement, etc., still existed at Rome.

do you think of the character of Father Rodin? Can one have full confidence in him?"

"He has so complete, so original, so secret, and so impenetrable a mind," said Father d'Aigrigny, with hesitation, "that it is difficult to form any certain judgment with respect to him."

"Do you think him ambitious?" said the cardinal, after another moment's pause. "Do you not suppose him capable of having other views than those of the greater glory of his Order?—Come, I have reasons for speaking thus," added the prelate, with emphasis.

"Why," resumed Father d'Aigrigny, not without suspicion, for the game is played cautiously between people of the same craft, "what should your Eminence think of him, either from your own observation, or from the report of the Father-General?"

"I think—that if his apparent devotion to his Order really concealed some after-thought—it would be well to discover it—for, with the influence that he has obtained at Rome (as I have found out), he might one day, and that shortly, become very formidable."

"Well!" cried Father d'Aigrigny, impelled by his jealousy of Rodin; "I am, in this respect, of the same opinion as your Eminence; for I have sometimes perceived in him flashes of ambition, that were as alarming as they were extraordinary—and since I must tell all to your Eminence——"

Father d'Aigrigny was unable to continue; at this moment Mrs. Grivois, who had been knocking at the door, half-opened it, and made a sign to her mistress. The princess answered by bowing her head, and Mrs. Grivois again withdrew. A second afterwards Rodin entered the room.

CHAPTER XVII.

RENDERING THE ACCOUNT.

At sight of Rodin, the two prelates and Father d'Aigrigny rose spontaneously, so much were they overawed by the real superiority of this man; their faces, just before contracted with suspicion and jealousy, suddenly brightened up, and seemed to smile on the reverend father with affec-

tionate deference. The princess advanced some steps to meet him.

Rodin, badly dressed as ever, leaving on the soft carpet the muddy track of his clumsy shoes, put his umbrella into one corner, and advanced towards the table—not with his accustomed humility, but with slow step, uplifted head, and steady glance; not only did he feel himself in the midst of his partisans, but he knew that he could rule them all by the power of his intellect.

"We were speaking of your reverence, my dear, good father," said the cardinal, with charming affability.

"Ah!" said Rodin, looking fixedly at the prelate; "and what were you saying?"

"Why," replied the Belgian bishop, wiping his forehead, "all the good that can be said of your reverence."

"Will you not take something, my good father?" said the princess to Rodin, as she pointed to the splendid sideboard.

"Thank you, madame, I have eaten my radish already this morning."

"My secretary, Abbé Berlini, who was present at your repast, was, indeed, much astonished at your reverence's frugality," said the prelate: "it is worthy of an anchorite."

"Suppose we talk of business," said Rodin, abruptly, like a man accustomed to lead and control the discussion.

"We shall always be most happy to hear you," said the prelate. "Your reverence yourself fixed to-day to talk over this great Rennepont affair. It is of such importance, that it was partly the cause of my journey to France; for to support the interests of the glorious Company of Jesus, with which I have the honor of being associated, is to support the interests of Rome itself, and I promised the reverend Father-General that I would place myself entirely at your orders."

"I can only repeat what his Eminence has just said,' added the bishop. "We set out from Rome together, and our ideas are just the same."

"Certainly," said Rodin, addressing the cardinal, "your Eminence may serve our cause, and that materially. I will tell you how presently."

Then, addressing the princess, he continued: "I have desired Dr. Baleinier to come here, madame, for it will be well to inform him of certain things."

"He will be admitted as usual," said the princess.

Since Rodin's arrival Father d'Aigrigny had remained

silent; he seemed occupied with bitter thoughts, and with some violent internal struggle. At last, half rising, he said to the prelate, in a forced tone of voice: "I will not ask your Eminence to judge between the reverend Father Rodin and myself. Our General has pronounced, and I have obeyed. But, as your Eminence will soon see our superior, I should wish that you would grant me the favor to report faithfully the answers of Father Rodin to one or two questions I am about to put to him."

The prelate bowed. Rodin looked at Father d'Aigrigny with an air of surprise, and said to him, dryly: "The thing is decided. What is the use of questions?"

"Not to justify myself," answered Father d'Aigrigny, "but to place matters in their true light before his Eminence."

"Speak, then; but let us have no useless speeches," said Rodin, drawing out his large silver watch, and looking at it. "By two o'clock I must be at Saint-Sulpice."

"I will be as brief as possible," said Father d'Aigrigny, with repressed resentment. Then, addressing Rodin, he resumed: "When your reverence thought fit to take my place, and to blame, very severely perhaps, the manner in which I had managed the interests confided to my care, I confess honestly that these interests were gravely compromised."

"Compromised?" said Rodin, ironically; "you mean lost. Did you not order me to write to Rome, to bid them renounce all hope?"

"That is true," said Father d'Aigrigny.

"It was then a desperate case, given up by the best doctors," continued Rodin, with irony, "and yet I have undertaken to restore it to life. Go on."

And, plunging both hands into the pockets of his trousers, he looked Father d'Aigrigny full in the face.

"Your reverence blamed me harshly," resumed Father d'Aigrigny, "not for having sought, by every possible means, to recover the property odiously diverted from our society——"

"All your casuists authorize you to do so," said the cardinal; "the texts are clear and positive; you have a right to recover; *per fas aut nefas* what has been treacherously taken from you."

"And therefore," resumed Father d'Aigrigny, "Father Rodin only reproached me with the military roughness of my means. 'Their violence,' he said, 'was in dangerous

opposition to the manners of the age.' Be it so; but first of all, I could not be exposed to any legal proceedings, and, but for one fatal circumstance, success would have crowned the course I had taken, however rough and brutal it may appear. Now, may I ask your reverence what ——"

"What I have done more than you?" said Rodin to Father d'Aigrigny, giving way to his impertinent habit of interrupting people; "what I have done better than you?—what step I have taken in the Rennepont affair, since I received it from you in a desperate condition? Is that what you wish to know?"

"Precisely," said Father d'Aigrigny, dryly.

"Well, I confess," resumed Rodin, in a sardonic tone, "just as you did great things, coarse things, turbulent things, I have been doing little, puerile, secret things. Oh, heaven! you cannot imagine what a foolish part I, who passed for a man of enlarged views, have been acting for the last six weeks.

"I should never have allowed myself to address such a reproach to your reverence, however deserved it may appear," said Father d'Aigrigny, with a bitter smile.

"A reproach?" said Rodin, shrugging his shoulders; "a reproach? You shall be the judge. Do you know what I wrote about you, some six weeks ago? Here it is: 'Father d'Aigrigny has excellent qualities. He will be of much service to me'—and from to-morrow I shall employ you very actively, added Rodin, by way of parenthesis—'but he is not great enough to know how to make himself little on occasion.' Do you understand?"

"Not very well," said Father d'Aigrigny, blushing.

"So much the worse for you," answered Rodin; "it only proves that I was right. Well, since I must tell you, I have been wise enough to play the most foolish part for six whole weeks. Yes, I have chatted nonsense with a grisette—have talked of liberty, progress, humanity, emancipation of women, with a young, excited girl; of Napoleon the Great, and all sorts of Bonapartist idolatry, with an old, imbecile soldier; of Imperial glory, humiliation of France, hopes in the King of Rome, with a certain marshal of France, who, with a heart full of adoration for the robber of thrones, that was transported to Saint-Helena, has a head as hollow and sonorous as a trumpet, into which you have only to blow some warlike or patriotic notes, and it will flourish away of itself, without knowing why or how. More than all this, I have talked of love affairs with a young tiger. When I told

you it was lamentable to see a man of any intelligence descend, as I have done, to all such petty ways of connecting the thousand threads of this dark web, was I not right? Is it not a fine spectacle to see the spider obstinately weaving its net?—to see the ugly little black animal crossing thread upon thread, fastening it here, strengthening it there, and again lengthening it in some other place? You shrug your shoulders in pity; but return two hours after—what will you find? The little black animal eating its fill, and in its web a dozen of the foolish flies, bound so securely, that the little black animal has only to choose the moment of its repast."

As he uttered these words, Rodin smiled strangely; his eyes, gradually half closed, opened to their full width, and seemed to shine more than usual. The Jesuit felt a sort of feverish excitement, which he attributed to the contest in which he had engaged before these eminent personages, who already felt the influence of his original and cutting speech.

Father d'Aigrigny began to regret having entered on the contest. He resumed, however, with ill-repressed irony: "I do not dispute the smallness of your means. I agree with you, they are very puerile—they are even very vulgar. But that is not quite sufficient to give an exalted notion of your merit. May I be allowed to ask——"

"What these means have produced?" resumed Rodin, with an excitement that was not usual with him. "Look into my spider's web, and you will see there the beautiful and insolent young girl, so proud, six weeks ago, of her grace, mind, and audacity—now pale, trembling, mortally wounded at the heart."

"But the act of chivalrous intrepidity of the Indian prince, with which all Paris is ringing," said the princess, "must surely have touched Mdlle. de Cardoville."

"Yes; but I have paralyzed the effect of that stupid and savage devotion, by demonstrating to the young lady that it is not sufficient to kill black panthers to prove one's self a susceptible, delicate, and faithful lover."

"Be it so," said Father d'Aigrigny; "we will admit the fact that Mdlle. de Cardoville is wounded to the heart."

"But what does this prove with regard to the Rennepont affair?" asked the cardinal, with curiosity, as he leaned his elbows on the table.

"There results from it," said Rodin, "that when our most dangerous enemy is mortally wounded, she abandons the battlefield. That is something, I should imagine."

"Indeed," said the princess, "the talents and audacity of Mdlle. de Cardoville would make her the soul of the coalition formed against us."

"Be it so," replied Father d'Aigrigny, obstinately; "she may be no longer formidable in that respect. But the wound in her heart will not prevent her from inheriting."

"Who tells you so?" asked Rodin, coldly, and with assurance. "Do you know why I have taken such pains, first to bring her in contact with Djalma, and then to separate her from him?"

"That is what I ask you," said Father D'Aigrigny; "how can this storm of passion prevent Mdlle. de Cardoville and the prince from inheriting?"

"Is it from the serene, or from the stormy sky, that darts the destroying thunderbolt?" said Rodin, disdainfully. "Be satisfied; I shall know where to place the conductor. As for M. Hardy, the man lived for three things: his workmen, his friend, his mistress. He has been thrice wounded in the heart. I always take aim at the heart; it is legal and sure."

"It is legal, and sure, and praiseworthy," said the bishop; "for, if I understand you rightly, this manufacturer had a concubine; now it is well to make use of an evil passion for the punishment of the wicked."

"True, quite true," added the cardinal; "if they have evil passions for us to make use of, it is their own fault."

"Our holy Mother Perpétue," said the princess, "took every means to discover this abominable adultery."

"Well, then, M. Hardy is wounded in his dearest affections, I admit," said Father d'Aigrigny, still disputing every inch of ground; "ruined too in his fortune, which will only make him the more eager after this inheritance."

The argument appeared of weight to the two prelates and the princess; all looked at Rodin with anxious curiosity. Instead of answering he walked up to the sideboard, and, contrary to his habits of stoical sobriety, and in spite of his repugnance for wine, he examined the decanters, and said: "What is there in them?"

"Claret and sherry," said the hostess, much astonished at the sudden taste of Rodin, "and——"

The latter took a decanter at hazard, and poured out a glass of Madeira, which he drank off at a draught. Just before he had felt a strange kind of shivering; to this had succeeded a sort of weakness. He hoped the wine would revive him.

After wiping his mouth with the back of his dirty hand,

he returned to the table, and said to Father d'Aigrigny: "What did you tell me about M. Hardy?"

"That being ruined in fortune, he would be the more eager to obtain this immense inheritance," answered Father d'Aigrigny, inwardly much offended at the imperious tone.

"M. Hardy think of money?" said Rodin, shrugging his shoulders. "He is indifferent to life, plunged in a stupor from which he only starts to burst into tears. Then he speaks with mechanical kindness to those about him. I have placed him in good hands. He begins, however, to be sensible to the attentions shown him, for he is good, excellent, weak; and it is to this excellence, Father d'Aigrigny, that you must appeal to finish the work in hand."

"I?" said Father d'Aigrigny, much surprised.

"Yes; and then you will find that the result I have obtained is considerable, and——"

Rodin paused, and, pressing his hand to his forehead, said to himself: "It is strange!"

"What is the matter?" said the princess, with interest.

"Nothing, madame," answered Rodin, with a shiver; "it is doubtless the wine I drank; I am not accustomed to it. I feel a slight headache; but it will pass."

"Your eyes are very bloodshot, my good father," said the princess.

"I have looked too closely into my web," answered the Jesuit, with a sinister smile; "and I must look again, to make Father d'Aigrigny, who pretends to be blind, catch a glimpse of my other flies. The two daughters of Marshal Simon, for instance, growing sadder and more dejected every day, at the icy barrier raised between them and their father; and the latter thinking himself one day dishonored if he does this, another if he does that; so that the hero of the Empire has become weaker and more irresolute than a child. What more remains of this impious family? Jacques Rennepont? Ask Morok, to what a state of debasement intemperance has reduced him, and towards what an abyss he is rushing!—There is my occurrence-sheet; you see to what are reduced all the members of this family, who, six weeks ago, had each elements of strength and union! Behold these Renneponts, who, by the will of their heretical ancestor, were to unite their forces to combat and crush our Society! —There was good reason to fear them; but what did I say? That I would act upon their passions. What have I done? I have acted upon their passions. At this hour they are vainly struggling in my web—they are mine—they are mine——"

As he was speaking, Rodin's countenance and voice had undergone a singular alteration: his complexion, generally so cadaverous, had become flushed, but unequally, and in patches; then, strange phenomenon! his eyes grew both more brilliant and more sunken, and his voice sharper and louder. The change in the countenance of Rodin, of which he did not appear to be conscious, was so remarkable, that the other actors in this scene looked at him with a sort of terror.

Deceived as to the cause of this impression, Rodin exclaimed with indignation, in a voice interrupted by deep gaspings for breath: "Is it pity for this impious race, that I read upon your faces? Pity for the young girl, who never enters a church, and erects pagan altars in her habitation? Pity for Hardy, the sentimental blasphemer, the philanthropic atheist, who had no chapel in his factory, and dared to blend the names of Socrates, Marcus-Aurelius, and Plato, with our Saviour's? Pity for the Indian worshipper of Brahma? Pity for the two sisters, who have never even been baptized? Pity for that brute, Jacques Rennepont? Pity for the stupid imperial soldier, who has Napoleon for his god, and the bulletins of the Grand Army for his gospel? Pity for this family of renegades, whose ancestor, a relapsed heretic, not content with robbing us of our property, excites from his tomb, at the end of a century and a half, his cursed race to lift their heads against us? What! to defend ourselves from these vipers, we shall not have the right to crush them in their own venom?—I tell you, that it is to serve heaven, and to give a salutary example to the world, to devote, by unchaining their own passions, this impious family to grief and despair and death!"

As he spoke thus, Rodin was dreadful in his ferocity; the fire of his eyes became still more brilliant; his lips were dry and burning, a cold sweat bathed his temples, which could be seen throbbing; an icy shudder ran through his frame. Attributing these symptoms to fatigue from writing through a portion of the night, and wishing to avoid fainting, he went to the sideboard, filled another glass with wine, which he drank off at a draught, and returned as the cardinal said to him: "If your course with regard to this family needed justification, my good father, your last word would have victoriously justified it. Not only are you right, according to your own casuists, but there is nothing in your proceedings contrary to human laws. As for the divine law, it is pleasing to the Lord to destroy impiety with its own weapons."

Conquered, as well as the others, by Rodin's diabolical assurance, and brought back to a kind of fearful admiration, Father d'Aigrigny said to him: "I confess I was wrong in doubting the judgment of your reverence. Deceived by the appearance of the means employed, I could not judge of their connection, and above all, of their results. I now see, that, thanks to you, success is no longer doubtful."

"This is an exaggeration," replied Rodin, with feverish impatience; "all these passions are at work, but the moment is critical. As the alchemist bends over the crucible, which may give him either treasures or sudden death—I alone at this moment——"

Rodin did not finish the sentence. He pressed both his hands to his forehead, with a stifled cry of pain.

"What is the matter?" said Father d'Aigrigny. "For some moments you have been growing fearfully pale."

"I do not know what is the matter," said Rodin, in an altered voice; "my headache increases—I am seized with a sort of giddiness."

"Sit down," said the princess, with interest.

"Take something," said the bishop.

"It will be nothing," said Rodin, with an effort; "I am no milksop, thank heaven!—I had little sleep last night; it is fatigue—nothing more. I was saying, that I alone could now direct this affair: but I cannot execute the plan myself. I must keep out of the way, and watch in the shade: I must hold the threads, which I alone can manage," added Rodin, in a faint voice.

"My good father," said the cardinal uneasily, "I assure you that you are very unwell. Your paleness is becoming livid."

"It is possible," answered Rodin, courageously; "but I am not to be so soon conquered. To return to our affair—this is the time, in which your qualities, Father d'Aigrigny, will turn to good account. I have never denied them, and they may now be of the greatest use. You have the power of charming—grace—eloquence—you must——"

Rodin paused again. A cold sweat poured from his forehead. He felt his legs give way under him, notwithstanding his obstinate energy.

"I confess, I am not well," he said; "yet, this morning, I was as well as ever. I shiver. I am icy cold."

"Draw near the fire—it is a sudden indisposition," said the bishop, offering his arm with heroic devotion; "it will not be anything of consequence."

"If you were to take something warm, a cup of tea," said the princess; "Dr. Baleinier will be here directly—he will reassure us as to this—indisposition."

"It is really inexplicable," said the prelate.

At these words of the cardinal, Rodin, who had advanced with difficulty towards the fire, turned his eyes upon the prelate, and looked at him fixedly in a strange manner, for about a second; then, strong in his unconquerable energy, notwithstanding the change in his features, which were now visibly disfigured, Rodin said, in a broken voice, which he tried to make firm: "The fire has warmed me; it will be nothing. I have no time to coddle myself. It would be a pretty thing to fall ill just as the Rennepont affair can only succeed by my exertions! Let us return to business. I told you, Father d'Aigrigny, that you might serve us a good deal; and you also, princess, who have espoused this cause as if it were your own——"

Rodin again paused. This time he uttered a piercing cry, sank upon a chair placed near him, and, throwing himself back convulsively, he pressed his hands to his chest, and exclaimed: "Oh! what pain!"

Then (dreadful sight!) a cadaverous decomposition, rapid as thought, took place in Rodin's features. His hollow eyes were filled with blood, and seemed to shrink back in their orbits, which formed, as it were, two dark holes, in the centre of which blazed points of fire; nervous convulsions drew the flabby, damp, and icy skin tight over the bony prominences of the face, which was becoming rapidly green. From the lips, writhing with pain, issued the struggling breath, mingled with the words: "Oh! I suffer! I burn!"

Then, yielding to a transport of fury, Rodin tore with his nails his naked chest, for he had twisted off the buttons of his waistcoat, and rent his black and filthy shirt-front, as if the pressure of those garments augmented the violence of the pain under which he was writhing. The bishop, the cardinal, and Father d'Aigrigny, hastily approached Rodin, to try and hold him; he was seized with horrible convulsions; but, suddenly, collecting all his strength, he rose upon his feet stiff as a corpse. Then, with his garments in disorder, his thin, gray hair standing up all around his greenish face, fixing his red and flaming eyes upon the cardinal, he seized him with convulsive grasp, and exclaimed in a terrible voice, half stifled in his throat: "Cardinal Malipieri—this illness is too sudden—they suspect me at Rome—you are of the

race of the Borgias—and your secretary was with me this morning!"

"Unhappy man! what does he dare insinuate?" cried the prelate, as amazed as he was indignant at the accusation. So saying, the cardinal strove to free himself from the grasp of Rodin, whose fingers were now as stiff as iron.

"I am poisoned!" muttered Rodin, and sinking back, he fell into the arms of Father d'Aigrigny.

Notwithstanding his alarm, the cardinal had time to whisper to the latter: "He thinks himself poisoned. He must therefore be plotting something very dangerous."

The door of the room opened. It was Dr. Baleinier.

"Oh, doctor!" cried the princess, as she ran pale and frightened towards him; "Father Rodin has been suddenly attacked with terrible convulsions. Quick! quick!"

"Convulsions? oh! it will be nothing, madame," said the doctor, throwing down his hat upon a chair, and hastily approaching the group which surrounded the sick man.

"Here is the doctor!" cried the princess. All stepped aside, except Father d'Aigrigny, who continued to support Rodin, leaning against a chair.

"Heavens! what symptoms!" cried Dr. Baleinier, examining with growing terror the countenance of Rodin, which from green was turning blue.

"What is it?" asked all the spectators, with one voice.

"What is it?" repeated the doctor, drawing back as if he had trodden upon a serpent. "It is the cholera! and contagious!"

On this frightful, magic word, Father d'Aigrigny abandoned his hold of Rodin, who rolled upon the floor.

"He is lost!" cried Dr. Baleinier. "But I will run to fetch the means for a last effort." And he rushed towards the door.

The Princess de Saint-Dizier, Father d'Aigrigny, the bishop, and the cardinal followed in terror the flight of Dr. Baleinier. They all pressed to the door, which, in their consternation, they could not open. It opened at last—but from without—and Gabriel appeared upon the threshold. Gabriel, the type of the true priest, the holy, the evangelical minister, to whom we can never pay enough of respect and ardent sympathy, and tender admiration. His angelic countenance, in its mild serenity, offered a striking contrast of these faces, all disturbed and contracted with terror.

The young priest was nearly thrown down by the fugi-

tives, who rushed through the now open doorway, exclaiming: "Do not go in! he is dying of the cholera. Fly!"

On these words, pushing back the bishop, who, being the last, was trying to force a passage, Gabriel ran towards Rodin, while the prelate succeeded in making his escape. Rodin, stretched upon the carpet, his limbs twisted with fearful cramps, was writhing in the extremity of pain. The violence of his fall had, no doubt, roused him to consciousness, for he moaned, in a sepulchral voice: "They leave me to die—like a dog—the cowards!—Help!—no one——"

And the dying man, rolling on his back with a convulsive movement, turned towards the ceiling a face on which was branded the infernal despair of the damned, as he once more repeated: "No one!——not one!"

His eyes, which suddenly flamed with fury, just then met the large blue eyes of the angelic and mild countenance of Gabriel who, kneeling beside him, said to him, in his soft, grave tones: "I am here, father—to help you, if help be possible—to pray for you, if God calls you to him."

"Gabriel!" murmured Rodin, with failing voice; "forgive me for the evil I have done you—do not leave me—do not——"

Rodin could not finish; he had succeeded in raising himself into a sitting posture; he now uttered a loud cry, and fell back without sense or motion.

* * * * * * *

The same day it was announced in the evening papers: "The cholera has broken out in Paris. The first case declared itself this day, at half-past three, P.M. in the Rue de Babylone, at Saint-Dizier House."

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE SQUARE OF NOTRE-DAME.

A WEEK had passed since Rodin was seized with the cholera, and its ravages had continually increased. That was an awful time! A funeral pall was spread over Paris, once so gay. And yet, never had the sky been of a more settled, purer blue; never had the sun shone more brilliantly. The inexorable serenity of nature, during the ravages of the deadly scourge, offered a strange and mysterious contrast.

The flaunting light of the dazzling sunshine fell full upon the features, contracted by a thousand agonizing fears. Each trembled for himself, or for those dear to him; every countenance was stamped with an expression of feverish astonishment and dread. People walked with rapid steps, as if they would escape from the fate which threatened them; besides, they were in haste to return to their homes, for often they left life, health, happiness, and, two hours later, they found agony, death, and despair.

At every moment, new dismal objects met the view. Sometimes carts passed along, filled with coffins, symmetrically piled; they stopped before every house. Men in black and gray garments were in waiting before the door; they held out their hands, and to some one coffin was thrown, to some two, frequently three or four, from the same house. It sometimes happened that the store was quickly exhausted, and the cart, which had arrived full, went away empty, whilst many of the dead in the street were still unserved. In nearly every dwelling, upstairs and down, from the roof to the cellar, there was a stunning tapping of hammers: coffins were being nailed down, and so many, so very many were nailed, that sometimes those who worked stopped from sheer fatigue. Then broke forth laments, heart-rending moans, despairing imprecations. They were uttered by those from whom the men in black and gray had taken some one to fill the coffins.

Unceasingly were the coffins filled, and day and night did those men work, but by day more than by night, for, as soon as it was dusk, came a gloomy file of vehicles of all kinds—the usual hearses were not sufficient; but cars, carts, drays, hackney-coaches, and such like, swelled the funeral procession; different to the other conveyances, which entered the streets full and went away empty—these came empty but soon returned full. During that period, the windows of many houses were illuminated, and often the lights remained burning till the morning. It was "the season." These illuminations resembled the gleaming rays which shine in the gay haunts of pleasure; but there were tapers instead of wax candles, and the chanting of prayers for the dead replaced the murmur of the ball-room. In the streets, instead of the facetious transparencies which indicate the costumers, there swung at intervals huge lanterns of a blood-red color, with these words in black letters: "Assistance for those attacked with the cholera." The true places for revelry, during the night, were the churchyards; they ran

riot—they, usually so desolate and silent, during the dark, quiet hours, when the cypress trees rustle in the breeze, so lonely, that no human step dared to disturb the solemn silence which reigned there at night, became on a sudden, animated, noisy, riotous, and resplendent with light. By the smoky flame of torches, which threw a red glare upon the dark fir-trees, and the white tombstones, many grave-diggers worked merrily, humming snatches of some favorite tune. Their laborious and hazardous industry then commanded a very high price; they were in such request that it was necessary to humor them. They drank often and much; they sang long and loud; and this to keep up their strength and spirits good, absolute requisites in such an employment. If, by chance, any did not finish the grave they had begun, some obliging comrade finished it for *them* (fitting expression!), and placed them in it with friendly care.

Other distant sounds responded to the joyous strains of the grave-diggers; public-houses had sprung up in the neighborhood of the churchyards, and the drivers of the dead, when they had "set down their customers," as they jocosely expressed themselves, enriched with their unusual gratuities, feasted and made merry like lords; dawn often found them with a glass in their hand, and a jest on their lips; and, strange to say, among these funeral satellites, who breathed the very atmosphere of the disease, the mortality was scarcely perceptible. In the dark, squalid quarters of the town, where, surrounded by infectious exhalations, the indigent population was crowded together, and miserable beings, exhausted by severe privation, were "bespoke" by the cholera, as it was energetically said at the time, not only individuals, but whole families, were carried off in a few hours; and yet, sometimes, oh, merciful Providence! one or two little children were left in the cold and empty room, after the father and mother, brother and sister, had been taken away in their shells.

Frequently, houses which had swarmed with hard working laborers, were obliged to be shut up for want of tenants; in one day, they had been completely cleared by this terrible visitation, from the cellars, where little chimney-sweepers slept upon straw, to the garret, on whose cold brick floor lay stretched some wan and half-naked being, without work and without bread. But, of all the wards of Paris, that which perhaps presented the most frightful spectacle during the progress of the cholera, was the City; and in the City, the square before the cathedral of Nôtre-Dame was almost every

day the theatre of dreadful scenes: for this locality was frequently thronged with those who conveyed the sick from the neighboring streets to the Great Hospital. The cholera had not one aspect, but a thousand. So that one week after Rodin had been suddenly attacked, several events combining the horrible and the grotesque occurred in the square of Nôtre Dame.

Instead of the Rue d'Arcole, which now leads directly to the square, it was then approached on one side, by a mean, narrow lane, like all the other streets of the City, and terminating in a dark, low archway. Upon entering the square, the principal door of the huge Cathedral was to the left of the spectator, and facing him were the Hospital buildings. A little beyond, was an opening which gave to view a portion of the parapet of the Quay Nôtre-Dame. A placard had been recently stuck on the discolored and sunken wall of the archway; it contained these words, traced in large characters.*

"VENGEANCE! VENGEANCE!

"The Working-men carried to the hospitals are poisoned, because the number of patients is too great; every night, Boats filled with Corpses, drop down the Seine.

"Vengeance and Death to the murderers of the People!"

Two men, enveloped in cloaks, and half-hidden in the deep shadow of the vault, were listening with anxious curiosity to the threatening murmur, which rose with increasing force from among a tumultuous assembly, grouped around the Hospital. Soon, cries of "Death to the doctors!—Vengeance!" reached the ears of the persons who were in ambush under the arch.

"The posters are working," said one; "the train is on fire. When once the populace is roused, we can set them on whom we please."

"I say," replied the other man, "look over there. That Hercules, whose athletic form towers above the mob, was one of the most frantic leaders when M. Hardy's factory was destroyed."

"To be sure he was; I know him again. Wherever mischief is to be done, you are sure to find those vagabonds."

* It is well-known that at the time of the cholera, such placards were numerous in Paris, and were alternately attributed to opposite parties. Among others, to the priests, many of the bishops having published mandatory letters, or stated openly in the churches of their diocese, that the Almighty had sent the cholera as a punishment to France for having driven away its lawful sovereign, and assimilated the Catholic to other forms of worship.

"Now, take my advice, do not let us remain under this archway," said the other man; "the wind is as cold as ice, and though I am cased in flannel——"

"You are right, the cholera is confoundedly impolite. Besides, everything is going on well here; I am likewise assured that the whole of the Faubourg Saint-Antoine is ready to rise in the republican cause; that will serve our ends, and our holy religion will triumph over revolutionary impiety. Let us rejoin Father d'Aigrigny."

"Where shall we find him?"

"Near here, come—come."

The two hastily disappeared.

The sun, beginning to decline, shed its golden rays upon the blackened sculptures of the porch of Nôtre-Dame, and upon its two massy towers, rising in imposing majesty against a perfectly blue sky, for during the last few days, a north-east wind, dry and cold, had driven away the lightest cloud. A considerable number of people, as we have already stated, obstructed the approach to the Hospital; they crowded round the iron railings that protect the front of the building, behind which was stationed a detachment of infantry, the cries of "Death to the doctors!" becoming every moment more threatening. The people who thus vociferated belonged to an idle, vagabond, and depraved populace—the dregs of the Paris mob; and (terrible spectacle!) the unfortunate beings who were forcibly carried through the midst of these hideous groups entered the Hospital, whilst the air resounded with hoarse clamors, and cries of "Death." Every moment, fresh victims were brought along in litters, and on stretchers; the litters were frequently furnished with coarse curtains, and thus the sick occupants were concealed from the public gaze; but the stretchers, having no covering, the convulsive movements of the dying patients often thrust aside the sheet, and exposed to view their faces, livid as corpses. Far from inspiring with terror the wretches assembled round the Hospital, such spectacles became to them the signal for savage jests, and atrocious predictions upon the fate of these poor creatures, when once in the power of the doctors.

The big blaster and Ciboule, with a good many of their adherents, were among the mob. After the destruction of Hardy's factory, the quarryman was formally expelled from the union of the Wolves, who would have nothing more to do with this wretch; since then, he had plunged into the grossest debauchery, and speculating on his her-

culean strength, had hired himself as the officious champion of Ciboule and her compeers. With the exception therefore of some chance passengers, the square of Nôtre-Dame was filled with a ragged crowd, composed of the refuse of the Parisian populace—wretches who call for pity as well as blame; for misery, ignorance, and destitution, beget but too fatally vice and crime. These savages of civilization felt neither pity, improvement, nor terror, at the shocking sights with which they were surrounded; careless of a life which was a daily struggle against hunger, or the allurements of guilt, they braved the pestilence with infernal audacity, or sank under it with blasphemy on their lips.

The tall form of the quarryman was conspicuous amongst the rest; with inflamed eyes and swollen features, he yelled at the top of his voice: "Death to the body-snatchers! they poison the people."

"That is easier than to feed them," added Ciboule. Then, addressing herself to an old man, who was being carried with great difficulty through the dense crowd, upon a chair, by two men, the hag continued: "Hey? don't go in there, old croaker; die here in the open air instead of dying in that den, where you'll be doctored like an old rat."

"Yes," added the quarryman; "and then they'll throw you into the water to feast the fishes, which you won't swallow any more."

At these atrocious cries, the old man looked wildly around, and uttered faint groans. Ciboule wished to stop the persons who were carrying him, and they had much difficulty in getting rid of the hag. The number of cholera-patients arriving increased every moment, and soon neither litters nor stretchers could be obtained, so that they were borne along in the arms of the attendants. Several awful episodes bore witness to the startling rapidity of the infection. Two men were carrying a stretcher covered with a blood-stained sheet; one of them suddenly felt himself attacked with the complaint; he stopped short, his powerless arms let go the stretcher; he turned pale, staggered, fell upon the patient, becoming as livid as him; the other man, struck with terror, fled precipitately, leaving his companion and the dying man in the midst of the crowd. Some drew back in horror, others burst into a savage laugh.

"The horses have taken fright," said the quarryman, "and have left the turn-out in the lurch."

"Help!" cried the dying man, with a despairing accent; "for pity's sake take me in."

"There's no more room in the pit," said one, in a jeering tone.

"And you've no legs left to reach the gallery," added another.

The sick man made an effort to rise; but his strength failed him; he fell back exhausted on the mattress. A sudden movement took place among the crowd, the stretcher was overturned, the old man and his companion were trodden underfoot, and their groans were drowned in the cries of "Death to the body-snatchers!" The yells were renewed with fresh fury, but the ferocious band, who respected nothing in their savage fury, were soon after obliged to open their ranks to several workmen, who vigorously cleared the way for two of their friends carrying in their arms a poor artisan. He was still young, but his heavy and already livid head hung down upon the shoulder of one of them. A little child followed, sobbing, and holding by one of the workmen's coats. The measured and sonorous sound of several drums was now heard at a distance in the winding streets of the city: they were beating the call to arms, for sedition was rife in the Faubourg Saint-Antoine. The drummers emerged from under the archway, and were traversing the square, when one of them, a gray-haired veteran, suddenly slackened the rolling of his drum, and stood still: his companions turned round in surprise—he had turned green; his legs gave way, he stammered some unintelligible words, and had fallen upon the pavement before those in the front rank had time to pause. The overwhelming rapidity of this attack startled for a moment the most hardened among the surrounding spectators; for, wondering at the interruption, a part of the crowd had rushed towards the soldiers.

At sight of the dying man, supported in the arms of two of his comrades, one of the individuals, who, concealed under the arch, had watched the beginning of the popular excitement, said to the drummers: "Your comrade drank, perhaps, at some fountain on the road?"

"Yes, sir," replied one; "he was very thirsty; he drank two mouthfuls of water on the Place du Châtelet."

"Then he is poisoned," said the man.

"Poisoned?" cried several voices.

"It is not surprising," replied the man, in a mysterious tone; "poison is thrown into the public fountains; and this very morning a man was massacred in the Rue Beau-

bourg who was discovered emptying a paper of arsenic into a pot of wine at a public-house."*

Having said these words, the man disappeared in the crowd. This report, no less absurd than the tales about the poisoning of the Hospital patients, was received with a general burst of indignation. Five or six ragged beings, regular ruffians, seized the body of the expiring drummer, hoisted it upon their shoulders, in spite of all the efforts of his comrades to prevent them, and paraded the square exhibiting the dismal trophy. Ciboule and the quarryman went before, crying: "Make way for the corpse! This is how they poison the people!"

A fresh incident now attracted the attention of the crowd. A travelling-carriage, which had not been able to pass along the Quai-Napoleon, the pavement of which was up, had ventured among the intricate streets of the city, and now arrived in the square of Nôtre-Dame on its way to the other side of the Seine. Like many others, its owners were flying from Paris, to escape the pestilence which decimated it. A man-servant and a lady's maid were in the rumble, and they exchanged a glance of alarm as they passed the Hospital, whilst a young man seated in the front part of the carriage let down the glass, and called to the postilions to go slowly, for fear of accident, as the crowd was very dense at that part of the square. This young man was Lord Morinval, and on the back seat were Lord Montbron and his niece, Lady Morinval. The pale and anxious countenance of the young lady showed the alarm which she felt; and Montbron, notwithstanding his firmness of mind, appeared to be very uneasy; he, as well as his niece, frequently had recourse to a smelling-bottle filled with camphor.

During the last few minutes, the carriage had advanced very slowly, the postilions managing their horses with great caution, when a sudden hubbub, at first distant and undefined, but soon more distinct, arose among the throng; as it drew near, the ringing sound of chains and metal, peculiar to the artillery-wagons, was plainly audible, and presently one of these vehicles came towards the travelling-carriage, from the direction of the Quai Nôtre-Dame. It seemed strange, that though the crowd was so compact, yet at the rapid approach of this wagon, the close ranks of human beings opened as if by enchantment, but the follow-

* It is notorious, that at this unhappy period several persons were massacred, under a false accusation of poisoning the fountains, etc.

ing words which were passed from mouth to mouth soon accounted for the prodigy: "A wagon full of dead! the wagon of the dead!" As we have already stated, the usual funeral conveyances were no longer sufficient for the removal of the corpses; a number of artillery wagons had been put into requisition, and the coffins were hastily piled in these novel hearses.

Many of the spectators regarded this gloomy vehicle with dismay, but the quarryman and his band redoubled their horrible jokes.

"Make way for the omnibus of the departed!" cried Ciboule.

"No danger of having ones toes crushed in that omnibus," said the quarryman.

"Doubtless they're easy to please, the stiff-uns in there."

"They never want to be set down, at all events."

"I say, there's only one reg'lar on duty as postilion!"

"That's true, the leaders are driven by a man in a smock-frock."

"Oh! I daresay the other soldier was tired, lazy fellow! and got into the omnibus with the others—they'll all get out at the same big hole."

"Head foremost, you know."

"Yes, they pitch them head first into a bed of lime."

"Why, one might follow the dead-cart blind-fold, and no mistake. It's worse than Montfauçon knacker-yards!"

"Ha! ha! ha!—it's rather gamey!" said the quarryman, alluding to the infectious and cadaverous odor which this funeral conveyance left behind it.

"Here's sport!" exclaimed Ciboule: "the omnibus of the dead will run against the fine coach. Hurrah! the rich folks will smell death."

Indeed, the wagon was now directly in front of the carriage, and at a very little distance from it. A man in a smock-frock and wooden shoes drove the two leaders, and an artilleryman the other horses. The coffins were so piled up within this wagon, that its semicircular top did not shut down closely, so that, as it jolted heavily over the uneven pavement, the biers could be seen chafing against each other. The fiery eyes and inflamed countenance of the man in the smock-frock showed that he was half intoxicated; urging on the horses with his voice, his heels, and his whip, he paid no attention to the remonstrances of the soldier, who had great difficulty in restraining his own animals, and was obliged to follow the irregular movements of the car-

man. Advancing in this disorderly manner, the wagon deviated from its course just as it should have passed the travelling-carriage, and ran against it. The shock forced open the top, one of the coffins was thrown out, and, after damaging the panels of the carriage, fell upon the pavement with a dull and heavy sound. The deal planks had been hastily nailed together, and were shivered in the fall, and from the wreck of the coffin rolled a livid corpse, half enveloped in a shroud.

At this horrible spectacle, Lady Morinval, who had mechanically leaned forward, gave a loud scream, and fainted. The crowd fell back in dismay; the postilions, no less alarmed, took advantage of the space left open to them by the retreat of the multitude; they whipped their horses, and the carriage dashed on towards the quay. As it disappeared behind the furthermost buildings of the Hospital, the shrill joyous notes of distant trumpets were heard, and repeated shouts proclaimed: "The Cholera Masquerade!" The words announced one of those episodes combining buffoonery with terror, which marked the period when the pestilence was on the increase, though now they can with difficulty be credited. If the evidence of eyewitnesses did not agree in every particular with the accounts given in the public papers of this masquerade, they might be regarded as the ravings of some diseased brain, and not as the notice of a fact which really occurred.

"The Masquerade of the Cholera" appeared, we say, in the square of Nôtre-Dame, just as Morinval's carriage gained the quay, after disengaging itself from the death-wagon.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE CHOLERA MASQUERADE.*

A STREAM of people, who preceded the masquerade, made a sudden irruption through the arch into the square, uttering loud cheers as they advanced. Children were also there, blowing horns, whilst some hooted and others hissed.

* We read in the *Constitutionnel*, Saturday, March 31st, 1832: "The Parisians readily conform to that part of the official instructions with regard to the cholera, which prescribes, as a preservation from the disease, not to be afraid, to amuse one's self, etc. The pleasures of Mid-Lent have been as brilliant and as mad as those of the carnival itself. For a long time past there had not been so many balls at this period of the year. Even the cholera has been made the subject of an itinerant caricature."

The quarryman, Ciboule, and their band, attracted by this new spectacle, rushed tumultuously towards the arch. Instead of the two eating-houses, which now (1845) stand on either side of the Rue d'Arcole, there was then only one, situated to the left of the vaulted passage, and much celebrated amongst the joyous community of students, for the excellence both of its cookery and its wines. At the first blare of the trumpets, sounded by the outriders in livery who preceded the masquerade, the windows of the great room of the eating-house were thrown open, and several waiters, with their napkins under their arms, leaned forward, impatient to witness the arrival of the singular guests they were expecting.

At length, the grotesque procession made its appearance in the thick of an immense uproar. The train comprised a chariot, escorted by men and women on horseback, clad in rich and elegant fancy dresses. Most of these maskers belonged to the middle and easy classes of society. The report had spread that a masquerade was in preparation, for the purpose of daring the cholera, and, by this joyous demonstration, to revive the courage of the affrighted populace. Immediately, artists, young men about town, students, and so on, responded to the appeal, and though till now unknown one to the other, they easily fraternized together. Many brought their mistresses, to complete the show. A subscription had been opened to defray the expenses, and, that morning, after a splendid breakfast at the other end of Paris, the joyous troop had started bravely on their march, to finish the day by a dinner in the square of Nôtre-Dame.

We say bravely, for it required a singular turn of mind, a rare firmness of character, in young women, to traverse, in this fashion, a great city plunged in consternation and terror—to fall in at every step with litters loaded with the dying, and carriages filled with the dead—to defy, as it were, in a spirit of strange pleasantry, the plague that was decimating the Parisians. It is certain that, in Paris alone, and there only amongst a peculiar class, could such an idea have ever been conceived or realized. Two men, grotesquely disguised as postilions at a funeral, with formidable false noses, rose-colored crape hat-bands, and large favors of roses and crape bows at their buttonholes, rode before the vehicle. Upon the platform of the car were groups of allegorical personages, representing WINE, PLEASURE, LOVE, PLAY. The mission of these symbolical beings was, by means of jokes, sarcasms, and mockeries, to plague the life out of

Goodman Cholera, a sort of funeral and burlesque Cassander, whom they ridiculed and made game of in a hundred ways. The moral of the play was this: "To brave Cholera in security, let us drink, laugh, game, and make love!"

Wine was represented by a huge, lusty Silenus, thick-set, and with swollen paunch, a crown of ivy on his brow, a panther's skin across his shoulder, and in his hand a large gilt goblet, wreathed with flowers. None other than Ninny Moulin, the famous moral and religious writer, could have exhibited to the astonished and delighted spectators an ear of so deep a scarlet, so majestic an abdomen, and a face of such triumphant and majestic fulness. Every moment, Ninny Moulin appeared to empty his cup—after which he burst out laughing in the face of Goodman Cholera. Goodman Cholera, a cadaverous pantaloon, was half-enveloped in a shroud; his mask of greenish cardboard, with red, hollow eyes, seemed every moment to grin as in mockery of death; from beneath his powdered peruke, surmounted by a pyramidical cotton night-cap, appeared his neck and arm, dyed of a bright green color; his lean hand, which shook almost always with a feverish trembling (not feigned, but natural), rested upon a crutch-handled cane; finally, as was becoming in a pantaloon, he wore red stockings, with buckles at the knees, and high slippers of black beaver. This grotesque representative of the cholera was Sleepinbuff.

Notwithstanding a slow and dangerous fever, caused by the excessive use of brandy, and by constant debauchery, that was silently undermining his constitution, Jacques Rennepont had been induced by Morok to join the masquerade. The brute-tamer himself, dressed as the King of Diamonds, represented Play. His forehead was adorned with a diadem of gilded paper, his face was pale and impassible, and, as his long, yellow beard fell down the front of his parti-colored robe, Morok looked exactly the character he personated. From time to time, with an air of grave mockery, he shook close to the eyes of Goodman Cholera a large bag full of sounding counters, and on this bag were painted all sorts of playing-cards. A certain stiffness in the right arm showed that the lion-tamer had not yet quite recovered from the effects of the wound which the panther had inflicted before being stabbed by Djalma.

Pleasure, who also represented Laughter, classically shook her rattle, with its sonorous gilded bells, close to the ears of Goodman Cholera. She was a quick, lively young girl, and her fine black hair was crowned with a scarlet cap

of liberty. For Sleepinbuff's sake, she had taken the place of the poor Bacchanal Queen, who would not have failed to attend on such an occasion—she, who had been so valiant and gay, when she bore her part in a less philosophical, but not less amusing masquerade. Another pretty creature, Modeste Bornichoux, who served as a model to a painter of renown (one of the cavaliers of the procession), was eminently successful in her representation of LOVE. He could not have had a more charming face, and more graceful form Clad in a light blue spangled tunic, with a blue and silver band across her chestnut hair, and little transparent wings affixed to her white shoulders, she placed one forefinger upon the other, and pointed with the prettiest impertinence at Goodman Cholera. Around the principal group, other maskers, more or less grotesque in appearance, waved each a banner, on which were inscriptions of a very anacreontic character, considering the circumstances:

"Down with the Cholera!" "Short and sweet!" "Laugh away, laugh always!" "We'll collar the Cholera!" "Love forever!" "Wine forever!" "Come if you dare, old terror!"

There was really such audacious gayety in this masquerade, that the greater number of the spectators, at the moment when it crossed the square, in the direction of the eating-house, where dinner was waiting, applauded it loudly and repeatedly. This sort of admiration, which courage, however mad and blind, almost always inspires, appeared to others (a small number, it must be confessed) a kind of defiance to the wrath of heaven; and these received the procession with angry murmurs. This extraordinary spectacle, and the different impressions it produced, were too remote from all customary facts to admit of a just appreciation. We hardly know if this daring bravado was deserving of praise or blame.

Besides, the appearance of those plagues, which from age to age decimate the population of whole countries, has almost always been accompanied by a sort of mental excitement, which none of those who have been spared by the contagion can hope to escape. It is a strange fever of the mind, which sometimes rouses the most stupid prejudices and the most ferocious passions, and sometimes inspires, on the contrary, the most magnificent devotion, the most courageous actions—with some, driving the fear of death to a point of the wildest terror—with others, exciting the contempt of life to express itself in the most audacious bravadoes. Caring little for the praise or blame it might

deserve, the masquerade arrived before the eating-house, and made its entry in the midst of universal acclamations. Everything seemed to combine to give full effect to this strange scene, by the opposition of the most singular contrasts. Thus the tavern, in which was to be held this extraordinary feast, being situated at no great distance from the antique cathedral, and the gloomy hospital, the religious anthems of the ancient temple, the cries of the dying, and the bacchanalian songs of the banqueteers, must needs mingle, and by turns drown one another. The maskers now got down from their chariot, and from their horses, and went to take their places at the repast, which was waiting for them. The actors in the masquerade are at table in the great room of the tavern. They are joyous, noisy, even riotous. Yet their gayety has a strange tone, peculiar to itself.

Sometimes, the most resolute involuntarily remember that their life is at stake in this mad and audacious game with destiny. That fatal thought is rapid as the icy fever-shudder, which chills you in an instant; therefore, from time to time, an abrupt silence, lasting indeed only for a second, betrays these passing emotions which are almost immediately effaced by new bursts of joyful acclamation, for each one says to himself: "No weakness! my chum and my girl are looking at me!"

And all laugh, and knock glasses together, and challenge the next man, and drink out of the glass of the nearest woman. Jacques had taken off the mask and peruke of Goodman Cholera. His thin, leaden features, his deadly paleness, the lurid brilliancy of his hollow eyes, showed the incessant progress of the slow malady which was consuming this unfortunate man, brought by excesses to the last extremity of weakness. Though he felt the slow fire devouring his entrails, he concealed his pain beneath a forced and nervous smile.

To the left of Jacques was Morok, whose fatal influence was ever on the increase, and to his right the girl disguised as Pleasure. She was named Mariette. By her side sat Ninny Moulin, in all his majestic bulk, who often pretended to be looking for his napkin under the table, in order to have the opportunity of pressing the knees of his other neighbor, Modeste, the representative of Love. Most of the guests were grouped according to their several tastes, each tender pair together, and the bachelors where they could. They had reached the second course, and the excellence of

the wine, the good cheer, the gay speeches, and even the singularity of the occasion, had raised their spirits to a high degree of excitement, as may be gathered from the extraordinary incidents of the following scene.

CHAPTER XX.

THE DEFIANCE.

Two or three times, without being remarked by the guests, one of the waiters had come to whisper to his fellows, and point with expressive gesture to the ceiling. But his comrades had taken small account of his observations or fears, not wishing, doubtless, to disturb the guests, whose mad gayety seemed ever on the increase.

"Who can doubt now of the superiority of our manner of treating this impertinent Cholera? Has he dared even to touch our sacred battalion?" said a magnificent mountebank-Turk, one of the standard-bearers of the masquerade.

"Here is all the mystery," answered another. "It is very simple. Only laugh in the face of the plague, and it will run away from you."

"And right enough too, for very stupid work it does," added a pretty little Columbine, emptying her glass.

"You are right, my darling; it is intolerably stupid work," answered the Clown belonging to the Columbine; "here you are, very quiet, enjoying life, and all on a sudden you die with an atrocious grimace. Well! what then? Clever, isn't it? I ask you, what does it prove?"

"It proves," replied an illustrious painter of the romantic school, disguised like a Roman out of one of David's pictures, "it proves that the Cholera is a wretched colorist, for he has nothing but a dirty green on his pallet. Evidently he is a pupil of Jacobus, that king of classical painters, who are another species of plagues."

"And yet, master," added respectfully a pupil of the great painter, "I have seen some cholera patients whose convulsions were rather fine, and their dying looks first-rate!"

"Gentlemen," cried a sculptor of no less celebrity, "the question lies in a nutshell. The Cholera is a detestable colorist, but a good draughtsman. He shows you the skeleton in no time. By heaven! how he strips off the flesh! —Michael Angelo would be nothing to him."

"True," cried they all, with one voice; "the Cholera is a bad colorist, but a good draughtsman."

"Moreover, gentlemen," added Ninny Moulin, with comic gravity, "this plague brings with it a providential lesson, as the great Bossuet would have said."

"The lesson! the lesson!"

"Yes, gentlemen; I seem to hear a voice from above, proclaiming: 'Drink of the best, empty your purse, and kiss your neighbor's wife; for your hours are perhaps numbered, unhappy wretch!'"

So saying, the orthodox Silenus took advantage of a momentary absence of mind on the part of Modeste, his neighbor, to imprint on the blooming cheek of LOVE a long, loud kiss. The example was contagious, and a storm of kisses was mingled with bursts of laughter.

"Ha! blood and thunder!" cried the great painter as he gayly threatened Ninny Moulin; "you are very lucky that to-morrow will perhaps be the end of the world, or else I should pick a quarrel with you for having kissed my lovely LOVE."

"Which proves to you, O Rubens! O Raphael! the thousand advantages of the Cholera, whom I declare to be essentially sociable and caressing."

"And philanthropic," said one of the guests; "thanks to him, creditors take care of the health of their debtors. This morning a usurer, who feels a particular interest in my existence, brought me all sorts of anti-choleraic drugs, and begged me to make use of them."

"And I!" said the pupil of the great painter. "My tailor wished to force me to wear a flannel band next to the skin, because I owe him a thousand crowns. But I answered, 'Oh, tailor, give me a receipt in full, and I will wrap myself up in flannel, to preserve you my custom!'"

"O Cholera, I drink to thee!" said Ninny Moulin, by way of grotesque invocation. "You are not Despair; on the contrary, you are the emblem of Hope—yes, of hope. How many husbands, how many wives, longed for a number (alas! too uncertain chance) in the lottery of widowhood! You appear, and their hearts are gladdened. Thanks to you, benevolent pest! their chances of liberty are increased a hundredfold."

"And how grateful heirs ought to be! A cold—a heat—a trifle—and there, in an hour, some old uncle becomes a revered benefactor!"

"And those who are always looking out for other people's places—what an ally they must find in the Cholera!"

"And how true it will make many vows of constancy!" said Modeste, sentimentally. "How many villains have sworn to a poor, weak woman, to love her all their lives, who never meant (the wretches!) to keep their word so well!"

"Gentlemen," cried Ninny Moulin, "since we are now, perhaps, at the eve of the end of the world, as yonder celebrated painter has expressed it, I propose to play the world topsy-turvy: I beg these ladies to make advances to us, to tease us, to excite us, to steal kisses from us, to take all sorts of liberties with us, and (we shall not die of it) even to insult us. Yes, I declare that I will allow myself to be insulted. So, LOVE, you may offer me the greatest insult that can be offered to a virtuous and modest bachelor," added the religious writer, leaning over towards his neighbor, who repulsed him with peals of laughter; and the proposal of Ninny Moulin being received with general hilarity, a new impulse was given to the mirth and riot.

In the midst of the uproar, the waiter, who had before entered the room several times, to whisper uneasily to his comrades, whilst he pointed to the ceiling, again appeared with a pale and agitated countenance; approaching the man who performed the office of butler, he said to him, in a low voice, tremulous with emotion: "They are come!"

"Who?"

"You know—up there;" and he pointed to the ceiling.

"Oh!" said the butler, becoming thoughtful; "where are they?"

"They have just gone upstairs; they are there now," answered the waiter, shaking his head with an air of alarm; "yes, they are there!"

"What does master say?"

"He is very vexed, because——" and the waiter glanced round at the guests. "He does not know what to do; he has sent me to you."

"What the devil have I to do with it?" said the other, wiping his forehead. "It was to be expected, and cannot be helped."

"I will not remain here till they begin."

"You may as well go, for your long face already attracts attention. Tell master we must wait for the upshot."

The above incident was scarcely perceived in the midst of the growing tumult of the joyous feast. But, among the

guests, one alone laughed not, drank not. This was Jacques. With fixed and lurid eye, he gazed upon vacancy. A stranger to what was passing around him, the unhappy man thought of the Bacchanal Queen, who had been so gay and brilliant in the midst of similar saturnalia. The remembrance of that one being, whom he still loved with an extravagant love, was the only thought that from time to time roused him from his besotted state.

It is strange, but Jacques had only consented to join this masquerade because the mad scene reminded him of the merry day he had spent with Cephyse—that famous breakfast, after a night of dancing, in which the Bacchanal Queen, from some extraordinary presentiment, had proposed a lugubrious toast with regard to this very pestilence, which was then reported to be approaching France. "To the Cholera!" had she said. "Let him spare those who wish to live, and kill at the same moment those who dread to part!"

And now, at this time, remembering those mournful words, Jacques was absorbed in painful thought. Morok perceived his absence of mind, and said aloud to him, "You have given over drinking, Jacques. Have you had enough wine? Then you will want brandy. I will send for some."

"I want neither wine nor brandy," answered Jacques, abruptly, and he fell back into a sombre reverie.

"Well, you may be right," resumed Morok, in a sardonic tone, and raising his voice still higher. "You do well to take care of yourself. I was wrong to name brandy in these times. There would be as much temerity in facing a bottle of brandy as the barrel of a loaded pistol."

On hearing his courage as a toper called in question, Sleepinbuff looked angrily at Morok. "You think it is from cowardice that I will not drink brandy!" cried the unfortunate man, whose half-extinguished intellect was roused to defend what he called his dignity. "Is it from cowardice that I refuse, d'ye think, Morok? Answer me!"

"Come, my good fellow, we have all shown our pluck today," said one of the guests to Jacques; "you, above all, who, being rather indisposed, yet had the courage to take the part of Goodman Cholera."

"Gentlemen," resumed Morok, seeing the general attention fixed upon himself and Sleepinbuff, "I was only joking; for if my comrade" (pointing to Jacques) "had the impudence to accept my offer, it would be an act, not of courage,

but of foolhardiness. Luckily, he has sense enough to renounce a piece of boasting so dangerous at this time, and I——"

"Waiter!" cried Jacques, interrupting Morok with angry impatience, "two bottles of brandy, and two glasses!"

"What are you going to do?" said Morok, with pretended uneasiness. "Why do you order two bottles of brandy?"

"For a duel," said Jacques, in a cool, resolute tone.

"A duel!" cried the spectators, in surprise.

"Yes," resumed Jacques, "a duel with brandy. You pretend there is as much danger in facing a bottle of brandy as a loaded pistol; let us each take a full bottle, and see who will be the first to cry quarter."

This strange proposition was received by some with shouts of joy, and by others with genuine uneasiness.

"Pravo! the champions of the bottle!" cried the first.

"No, no; there would be too much danger in such a contest," said the others.

"Just now," added one of the guests, "this challenge is as serious as an invitation to fight to the death."

"You hear," said Morok, with a diabolical smile, "you hear, Jacques? Will you now retreat before the danger?"

At these words, which reminded him of the peril to which he was about to expose himself, Jacques started, as if a sudden idea had occurred to him. He raised his head proudly, his cheeks were slightly flushed, his eye shone with a kind of gloomy satisfaction, and he exclaimed in a firm voice: "Hang it, waiter! are you deaf? I asked you for two bottles of brandy."

"Yes, sir," said the waiter, going to fetch them, although himself frightened at what might be the result of this bacchanalian struggle. But the mad and perilous resolution of Jacques was applauded by the majority.

Ninny Moulin moved about on his chair, stamped his feet, and shouted with all his might: "Bacchus and drink! bottles and glasses! the throats are dry! brandy to the rescue! Largess! largess!"

And, like a true champion of the tournament, he embraced Modeste, adding, to excuse the liberty: "Love, you shall be the Queen of Beauty, and I am only anticipating the victor's happiness!"

"Brandy to the rescue!" repeated they all, in chorus. "Largess!"

"Gentlemen," added Ninny Moulin, with enthusiasm, "shall we remain indifferent to the noble example set us by

Goodman Cholera? He said in his pride, 'brandy!' Let us gloriously answer, 'punch!'"

"Yes, yes! punch!"

"Punch to the rescue!"

"Waiter!" shouted the religious writer, with the voice of a Stentor, "waiter! have you a pan, a caldron, a hogshead, or any other immensity, in which we can brew a monster punch?"

"A Babylonian punch!"

"A lake of punch!"

"An ocean of punch!"

Such was the ambitious crescendo that followed the proposition of Ninny Moulin.

"Sir," answered the waiter, with an air of triumph, "we just happen to have a large copper caldron, quite new. It has been used, and would hold at least thirty bottles."

"Bring the caldron!" said Ninny Moulin, majestically.

"The caldron forever!" shouted the chorus.

"Put in twenty bottles of brandy, six loaves of sugar, a dozen lemons, a pound of cinnamon, and then—fire! fire!" shouted the religious writer, with the most vociferous exclamations.

"Yes, yes! fire!" repeated the chorus!

The proposition of Ninny Moulin gave a new impetus to the general gayety; the most extravagant remarks were mingled with the sound of kisses, taken or given under the pretext that perhaps there would be no to-morrow, that one must make the most of the present, etc., etc. Suddenly, in one of the moments of silence which sometimes occur in the midst of the greatest tumult, a succession of slow and measured taps sounded above the ceiling of the banqueting-room. All remained silent, and listened.

CHAPTER XXI.

BRANDY TO THE RESCUE.

After the lapse of some seconds, the singular rapping which had so much surprised the guests, was again heard, but this time louder and longer.

"Waiter!" cried one of the party, "what in the devil's name is that knocking?"

The waiter, exchanging with his comrades a look of uneasi-

ness and alarm, stammered out in reply: "Sir——it is——it is——"

"Well! I suppose it is some crabbed, cross-grained lodger, some animal, the enemy of joy, who is pounding on the floor of his room to warn us to sing less loud," said Ninny Moulin.

"Then, by a general rule," answered sententiously the pupil of the great painter, "if lodger or landlord ask for silence, tradition bids us reply by an infernal uproar, destined to drown all his remonstrances. Such, at least," added the scapegrace, modestly, "are the foreign relations that I have always seen observed between neighboring powers."

This remark was received with general laughter and applause. During the tumult, Morok questioned one of the waiters, and then exclaimed in a shrill tone, which rose above the clamor: "I demand a hearing!"

"Granted!" cried the others, gayly. During the silence which followed the exclamation of Morok, the noise was again heard; it was this time quicker than before.

"The lodger is innocent," said Morok, with a strange smile, "and would be quite incapable of interfering with your enjoyment."

"Then why does he keep up that knocking?" said Ninny Moulin, emptying his glass.

"Like a deaf man who has lost his ear-horn?" added the young artist.

"It is not the lodger who is knocking," said Morok, in a sharp, quick tone; "for they are nailing him down in his coffin." A sudden and mournful silence followed these words.

"His coffin—no, I am wrong," resumed Morok; "her coffin, I should say, or more properly their coffin; for, in these pressing times, they put mother and child together."

"A woman!" cried Pleasure, addressing the waiter; "is it a woman that is dead?"

"Yes, ma'am; a poor young woman about twenty years of age," answered the waiter in a sorrowful tone. "Her little girl, that she was nursing, died soon after—all in less than two hours. My master is very sorry that you ladies and gents should be disturbed in this way; but he could not foresee this misfortune, as yesterday morning the young woman was quite well, and singing with all her might—no one could have been gayer than she was."

Upon these words, it was as if a funeral pall had been suddenly thrown over a scene lately so full of joy; all the

rubicund and jovial faces took an expression of sadness; no one had the hardihood to make a jest of mother and child, nailed down together in the same coffin. The silence became so profound, that one could hear each breath oppressed by terror: the last blows of the hammer seemed to strike painfully on every heart; it appeared as if each sad feeling, until now repressed, was about to replace that animation and gayety, which had been more factitious than sincere. The moment was decisive. It was necessary to strike an immediate blow, and to raise the spirits of the guests, for many pretty rosy faces began to grow pale, many scarlet ears became suddenly white; Ninny Moulin's were of the number.

"On the contrary, Sleepinbuff exhibited an increase of audacity; he drew up his figure, bent down from the effects of exhaustion, and, with a cheek slightly flushed, he exclaimed: "Well, waiter? are those bottles of brandy coming? and the punch? Devil and all! are the dead to frighten the living?"

"He's right! Down with sorrow, and let's have the punch!" cried several of the guests, who felt the necessity of reviving their courage.

"Forward, punch!"

"Begone, dull care!"

"Jollity forever!"

"Gentlemen, here is the punch," said a waiter, opening the door. At sight of the flaming beverage, which was to reanimate their enfeebled spirits, the room rang with the loudest applause.

The sun had just set. The room was large, being capable of dining a hundred guests; and the windows were few, narrow, and half veiled by red cotton curtains. Though it was not yet night, some portions of this vast saloon were almost entirely dark. Two waiters brought the monster-punch, in an immense brass kettle, brilliant as gold, suspended from an iron bar, and crowned with flames of changing color. The burning beverage was then placed upon the table, to the great joy of the guests, who began to forget their past alarms.

"Now," said Jacques to Morok, in a taunting tone, "while the punch is burning, we will have our duel. The company shall judge." Then, pointing to the two bottles of brandy, which the waiter had brought, Jacques added: "Choose your weapon!"

"Do you choose," answered Morok.

"Well! here's your bottle—and here's your glass. Ninny Moulin shall be umpire."

"I do not refuse to be judge of the field," answered the religious writer, "only I must warn you, comrade, that you are playing a desperate game, and that just now, as one of these gentlemen has said, the neck of a bottle of brandy in one's mouth, is perhaps more dangerous than the barrel of a loaded pistol."

"Give the word, old fellow!" said Jacques, interrupting Ninny Moulin, "or I will give it myself."

"Since you will have it so—so be it!"

"The first who gives in is conquered," said Jacques.

"Agreed!" answered Morok.

"Come, gentlemen, attention! we must follow every movement," resumed Ninny Moulin. "Let us first see if the bottles are of the same size—equality of weapons being the foremost condition."

During these preparations, profound silence reigned in the room. The courage of the majority of those present, animated for a moment by the arrival of the punch, was soon again depressed by gloomy thoughts, as they vaguely foresaw the danger of the contest between Morok and Jacques. This impression, joined to the sad thoughts occasioned by the incident of the coffin, darkened by degrees many a countenance. Some of the guests, indeed, continued to make a show of rejoicing, but their gayety appeared forced. Under certain circumstances, the smallest things will have the most powerful effect. We have said that, after sunset, a portion of this large room was plunged in obscurity; therefore, the guests who sat in the remote corners of the apartment, had no other light than the reflection of the flaming punch. Now it is well known, that the flame of burning spirit throws a livid, bluish tint over the countenance; it was therefore a strange, almost frightful spectacle, to see a number of the guests, who happened to be at a distance from the windows, in this ghastly and fantastic light.

The painter, more struck than all the rest by this effect of color, exclaimed: "Look! at this end of the table, we might fancy ourselves feasting with cholera-patients, we are such fine blues and greens."

This jest was not much relished. Fortunately, the loud voice of Ninny Moulin demanded attention, and for a moment turned the thoughts of the company.

"The lists are open," cried the religious writer, really

more frightened than he chose to appear. "Are you ready brave champions?" he added.

"We are ready," said Morok and Jacques.

"Present! fire!" cried Ninny Moulin, clapping his hands. And the two drinkers each emptied a tumbler full of brandy at a draught.

Morok did not even knit his brow; his marble face remained impassible; with a steady hand he replaced his glass upon the table. But Jacques, as he put down his glass, could not conceal a slight convulsive trembling, caused by internal suffering.

"Bravely done!" cried Ninny Moulin. "The quarter of a bottle of brandy at a draught—it is glorious! No one else here would be capable of such prowess. And now, worthy champions, if you believe me, you will stop where you are."

"Give the word!" answered Jacques, intrepidly. And, with feverish and shaking hand, he seized the bottle; then suddenly, instead of filling his glass, he said to Morok: "Bah! we want no glasses. It is braver to drink from the bottle. I dare you to it!"

Morok's only answer was to shrug his shoulders, and raise the neck of the bottle to his lips. Jacques hastened to imitate him. The thin, yellowish, transparent glass gave a perfect view of the progressive diminution of the liquor. The stony countenance of Morok, and the pale thin face of Jacques, on which already stood large drops of cold sweat, were now, as well as the features of the other guests, illumined by the bluish light of the punch; every eye was fixed upon Morok and Jacques, with that barbarous curiosity which cruel spectacles seem involuntarily to inspire.

Jacques continued to drink, holding the bottle in his left hand; suddenly, he closed and tightened the fingers of his right hand with a convulsive movement; his hair clung to his icy forehead, and his countenance revealed an agony of pain. Yet he continued to drink; only, without removing his lips from the neck of the bottle, he lowered it for an instant, as if to recover breath. Just then, Jacques met the sardonic look of Morok, who continued to drink with his accustomed impassibility. Thinking that he saw the expression of insulting triumph in Morok's glance, Jacques raised his elbow abruptly, and drank with avidity a few drops more. But his strength was exhausted. A quenchless fire devoured his vitals. His sufferings were too intense, and he could no longer bear up against them. His head fell backwards, his jaws closed convulsively, he crushed the neck of

the bottle between his teeth, his neck grew rigid, his limbs writhed with spasmodic action, and he became almost senseless.

"Jacques, my good fellow! it is nothing," cried Morok, whose ferocious glance now sparkled with diabolical joy. Then, replacing his bottle on the table, he rose to go to the aid of Ninny Moulin, who was vainly endeavoring to hold Sleepinbuff.

This sudden attack had none of the symptoms of cholera. Yet terror seized upon all present; one of the women was taken with hysterics, and another uttered piercing cries and fainted away. Ninny Moulin, leaving Jacques in the hands of Morok, ran towards the door to seek for help,—when that door was suddenly opened, and the religious writer drew back in alarm, at the sight of the unexpected personage who appeared on the threshold.

CHAPTER XXII.

MEMORIES.

The person before whom Ninny Moulin stopped in such extreme astonishment was the Bacchanal Queen.

Pale and wan, with hair in disorder, hollow cheeks, sunken eyes, and clothed almost in rags, this brilliant and joyous heroine of so many mad orgies was now only the shadow of her former self. Misery and grief were impressed on that countenance, once so charming. Hardly had she entered the room, when Cephyse paused; her mournful and unquiet gaze strove to penetrate the half-obscurity of the apartment, in search of him she longed to see. Suddenly the girl started, and uttered a loud scream. She had just perceived, at the other side of a long table, by the bluish light of the punch, Jacques struggling with Morok and one of the guests, who were hardly able to restrain his convulsive movements.

At this sight Cephyse, in her first alarm, carried away by her affection, did what she had so often done in the intoxication of joy and pleasure. Light and agile, instead of losing precious time in making a long circuit, she sprang at once upon the table, passed nimbly through the array of plates and bottles, and with one spring was by the side of the sufferer.

"Jacques!" she exclaimed, without yet remarking the

lion-tamer, and throwing herself on the neck of her lover "Jacques! it is I—Cephyse!"

That well-known voice, that heart-piercing cry, which came from the bottom of the soul, seemed not unheard by Sleepinbuff. He turned his head mechanically towards the Bacchanal Queen, without opening his eyes, and heaved a deep sigh; his stiffened limbs relaxed, a slight trembling succeeded to the convulsions, and in a few seconds his heavy eyelids were raised with an effort, so as to uncover his dull and wandering gaze. Mute with astonishment, the spectators of this scene felt an uneasy curiosity. Cephyse, kneeling beside her lover, bathed his hands in her tears, covered them with kisses, and exclaimed, in a voice broken by sobs, "It is I—Cephyse—I have found you again—it was not my fault that I abandoned you! Forgive me, forgive——"

"Wretched woman!" cried Morok, irritated at this meeting, which might, perhaps, be fatal to his projects; "do you wish to kill him? In his present state, this agitation is death. Begone!" So saying, he seized Cephyse suddenly by the arm, just as Jacques, waking, as it were, from a painful dream, began to distinguish what was passing around him.

"You! it is you!" cried the Bacchanal Queen, in amazement, as she recognized Morok, "who separated me from Jacques!"

She paused; for the dim eye of the victim, as it rested upon her, grew suddenly bright.

"Cephyse!" murmured Jacques; "is it you?"

"Yes, it is I," answered she, in a voice of deep emotion; "who have come—I will tell you——"

She was unable to continue, and, as she clasped her hands together, her pale, agitated, tearful countenance expressed her astonishment and despair at the mortal change which had taken place in the features of Jacques. He understood the cause of her surprise, and as he contemplated, in his turn, the suffering and emaciated countenance of Cephyse, he said to her, "Poor girl! you also have had to bear much grief, much misery—I should hardly have known you."

"Yes," replied Cephyse, "much grief—much misery—and worse than misery," she added, trembling, whilst a deep blush overspread her pale features.

"Worse than misery?" said Jacques, astonished.

"But it is you who have suffered," hastily resumed Cephyse, without answering her lover.

"Just now, I was going to make an end of it—your voice

has recalled me for an instant—but I feel something here," and he laid his hand upon his breast, "which never gives quarter. It is all the same now—I have seen you—I shall die happy."

"You shall not die, Jacques; I am here——"

"Listen to me, my girl. If I had a bushel of live coal in my stomach, it could hardly burn me more. For more than a month, I have been consuming my body by a slow fire. This gentleman," he added, glancing at Morok, "this dear friend, always undertook to feed the flame. I do not regret life; I have lost the habit of work, and taken to drink and riot; I should have finished by becoming a thorough blackguard; I preferred that my friend here should amuse himself with lighting a furnace in my inside. Since what I drank just now, I am certain that it flames like yonder punch."

"You are both foolish and ungrateful," said Morok, shrugging his shoulders; "you held out your glass, and I filled it—and, faith, we shall drink long and often together yet."

For some moments, Cephyse had not withdrawn her eyes from Morok. "I tell you, that you have long blown the fire, in which I have burnt my skin," resumed Jacques, addressing Morok in a feeble voice, "so that they may not think I die of cholera. It would look as if I had been frightened by the part I played. I do not therefore reproach you, my affectionate friend," added he, with a sardonic smile; "you dug my grave gayly—and sometimes, when, seeing the great dark hole, into which I was about to fall, I drew back a step—but you, my excellent friend, still pushed me forward, saying, 'Go on, my boy, go on!'—and I went on—and here I am——"

So saying, Sleepinbuff burst into a bitter laugh, which sent an icy shudder through the spectators of this scene.

"My good fellow," said Morok, coolly, "listen to me, and follow my advice——"

"Thank you! I know your advice—and, instead of listening to you, I prefer speaking to my poor Cephyse. Before I go down to the moles, I should like to tell her what weighs on my heart."

"Jacques," replied Cephyse, "do not talk so. I tell you, you shall not die."

"Why, then, my brave Cephyse, I shall owe my life to you," returned Jacques, in a tone of serious feeling, which surprised the spectators. "Yes," resumed he, "when I came to myself, and saw you so poorly clad, I felt some-

thing good about my heart—do you know why?—it was because I said to myself, 'Poor girl! she has kept her word bravely; she has chosen to toil, and want, and suffer—rather than take another love—who would have given her what I gave her as long as I could'—and that thought, Cephyse, refreshed my soul. I needed it, for I was burning—and I burn still," added he, clinching his fists with pain; "but that made me happy—it did me good—thanks, my good, brave Cephyse—yes, you are good and brave—and you were right; for I never loved any but you in the wide world; and if, in my degradation, I had one thought that raised me a little above the filth, and made me regret that I was not better—the thought was of you! Thanks then, my poor, dear love," said Jacques, whose hot and shining eyes were becoming moist; "thanks once again," and he reached his cold hand to Cephyse; "if I die, I shall die happy—if I live, I shall live happy also. Give me your hand, my brave Cephyse!—you have acted like a good and honest creature."

Instead of taking the hand which Jacques offered her, Cephyse, still kneeling, bowed her head, and dared not raise her eyes to her lover.

"You don't answer," said he, leaning over towards the young girl; "you don't take my hand—why is this?"

The unfortunate creature only answered by stifled sobs. Borne down with shame, she held herself in so humble, so supplicating an attitude, that her forehead almost touched the feet of her lover.

Amazed at the silence and conduct of the Bacchanal Queen, Jacques looked at her with increasing agitation; suddenly he stammered out with trembling lips, "Cephyse, I know you. If you do not take my hand, it is because——"

Then, his voice failing, he added, in a dull tone, after a moment's silence, "When, six weeks ago, I was taken to prison, did you not say to me, 'Jacques, I swear that I will work—and if need be, live in horrible misery—but I will live true!' That was your promise. Now, I know you never speak false; tell me you have kept your word, and I shall believe you."

Cephyse only answered by a heart-rending sob, as she pressed the knees of Jacques against her heaving bosom. By a strange contradiction, more common than is generally thought—this man, degraded by intoxication and debauchery, who, since he came out of prison, had plunged in every

excess, and tamely yielded to all the fatal incitements of Morok, yet received a fearful blow, when he learned, by the mute avowal of Cephyse, the infidelity of this creature, whom he had loved in spite of degradation. The first impulse of Jacques was terrible. Notwithstanding his weakness and exhaustion, he succeeded in rising from his seat, and, with a countenance contracted by rage and despair, he seized a knife, before they had time to prevent him, and turned it upon Cephyse. But at the moment he was about to strike, shrinking from an act of murder, he hurled the knife far away from him, and falling back into the chair, covered his face with his hands.

At the cry of Ninny Moulin, who had, though late, thrown himself upon Jacques to take away the knife, Cephyse raised her head: Jacques's woeful dejection wrung her heart; she rose, and fell upon his neck, notwithstanding his resistance, exclaiming in a voice broken by sobs, "Jacques, if you knew! if you only knew—listen—do not condemn me without hearing me—I will tell you all, I swear to you—without falsehood—this man," and she pointed to Morok, "will not dare deny what I say; he came, and told me to have the courage to——"

"I do not reproach you. I have no right to reproach you. Let me die in peace. I ask nothing but that now," said Jacques, in a still weaker voice, as he repulsed Cephyse. Then he added, with a grievous and bitter smile, "Luckily, I have my dose. I knew—what I was doing—when I accepted the duel with brandy."

"No, you shall not die, and you shall hear me," cried Cephyse, with a bewildered air; "you shall hear me, and everybody else shall hear me. They shall see that it is not my fault. Is it not so, gentlemen? Do I not deserve pity? You will entreat Jacques to forgive me; for if driven by misery—finding no work—I was forced to this—not for the sake of any luxury—you see the rags I wear—but to get bread and shelter for my poor, sick sister—dying, and even more miserable than myself—would you not have pity upon me? Do you think one finds pleasure in one's infamy?" cried the unfortunate, with a burst of frightful laughter; then she added, in a low voice, and with a shudder, "Oh, if you knew, Jacques! it is so infamous, so horrible, that I preferred death to falling so low a second time. I should have killed myself, had I not heard you were here." Then, seeing that Jacques did not answer her, but shook his head mournfully as he sank down, though still supported by

Ninny Moulin, Cephyse exclaimed, as she lifted her clasped hands towards him, "Jacques! one word—for pity's sake—forgive me!"

"Gentlemen, pray remove this woman," cried Morok; "the sight of her causes my friend too painful emotions."

"Come, my dear child, be reasonable," said several of the guests, who, deeply moved by this scene, were endeavoring to withdraw Cephyse from it; "leave him, and come with us; he is not in any danger."

"Gentlemen! oh, gentlemen!" cried the unfortunate creature, bursting into tears, and raising her hands in supplication; "listen to me—I will do all that you wish me—I will go—but, in heaven's name, send for help, and do not let him die thus. Look, what pain he suffers! what horrible convulsions!"

"She is right," said one of the guests, hastening towards the door; "we must send for a doctor."

"There is no doctor to be found," said another; "they are all too busy."

"We will do better than that," cried a third; "the Hospital is just opposite, and we can carry the poor fellow thither. They will give him instant help. A leaf of the table will make a litter, and the table-cloth a covering."

"Yes, yes, that is it," said several voices; "let us carry him over at once."

Jacques, burnt up with brandy, and overcome by his interview with Cephyse, had again fallen into violent convulsions. It was the dying paroxysm of the unfortunate man. They were obliged to tie him with the ends of the cloth, so as to secure him to the leaf which was to serve for a litter, which two of the guests hastened to carry away. They yielded to the supplication of Cephyse, who asked, as a last favor, to accompany Jacques to the Hospital. When the mournful procession quitted the great room of the eating-house, there was a general flight among the guests. Men and women made haste to wrap themselves in their cloaks, in order to conceal their costumes. The coaches, which had been ordered in tolerable number for the return of the masquerade, had luckily arrived. The defiance had been fully carried out, the audacious *bravado* accomplished, and they could now retire with the honors of war. Whilst a part of the guests were still in the room, an uproar, at first distant, but which soon drew nearer, broke out with incredible fury in the square of Nôtre-Dame.

Jacques had been carried to the outer door of the tavern,

Morok and Ninny Moulin, striving to open a passage through the crowd in the direction of the Hospital, preceded the litter. A violent reflux of the multitude soon forced them to stop, whilst a new storm of savage outcries burst from the other extremity of the square, near the angle of the church.

"What is it then?" asked Ninny Moulin of one of those ignoble figures that was leaping up before him. "What are those cries?"

"They are making mince-meat of a poisoner, like him they have thrown into the river," replied the man. "If you want to see the fun, follow me close," added he, "and peg away with your elbows, for fear you should be too late." Hardly had the wretch pronounced these words than a dreadful shriek sounded above the roar of the crowd, through which the bearers of the litter, preceded by Morok, were with difficulty making their way. It was Cephyse who uttered that cry. Jacques (one of the seven heirs of the Rennepont family) had just expired in her arms! By a strange fatality, at the very moment that the despairing exclamation of Cephyse announced that death, another cry rose from that part of the square where they were attacking the poisoner. That distant, supplicating cry, tremulous with horrible alarm, like the last appeal of a man staggering beneath the blows of his murderers, chilled the soul of Morok in the midst of his execrable triumph.

"Damnation!" cried the skilful assassin, who had selected drunkenness and debauchery for his murderous but legal weapons; "it is the voice of the Abbé d'Aigrigny, whom they have in their clutches!"

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE POISONER.

It is necessary to go back a little before relating the adventure of Father d'Aigrigny, whose cry of distress made so deep an impression upon Morok just at the moment of Jacques Rennepont's death. We have said that the most absurd and alarming reports were circulating in Paris; not only did people talk of poison given to the sick, or thrown into the public fountains, but it was also said that wretches

had been surprised in the act of putting arsenic into the pots which are usually kept all ready on the counters of wine-shops. Goliath was on his way to rejoin Morok, after delivering a message to Father d'Aigrigny, who was waiting in a house on the Place de l'Archévêché. He entered a wine-shop in the Rue de la Calandre, to get some refreshment, and having drunk two glasses of wine, he proceeded to pay for them. Whilst the woman of the house was looking for change, Goliath, mechanically and very innocently, rested his hand on the mouth of one of the pots that happened to be within his reach.

The tall stature of this man and his repulsive and savage countenance had already alarmed the good woman, whose fears and prejudices had previously been roused by the public rumors on the subject of poisoning; but when she saw Goliath place his hand over the mouth of one of her pots, she cried out in dismay: "Oh! my gracious! what are you throwing into that pot?" At these words, spoken in a loud voice, and with the accent of terror, two or three of the drinkers at one of the tables rose precipitately, and ran to the counter, while one of them rashly exclaimed: "It is a poisoner!"

Goliath, not aware of the reports circulated in the neighborhood, did not a first understand of what he was accused. The men raised their voices as they called on him to answer the charge; but he, trusting to his strength, shrugged his shoulders in disdain, and roughly demanded the change, which the pale and frightened hostess no longer thought of giving him.

"Rascal!" cried one of the men, with so much violence that several of the passers-by stopped to listen; "you shall have your change when you tell us what you threw in the pot!"

"Ha! did he throw anything into the wine-pot?" said one of the passers-by.

"It is, perhaps, a poisoner," said another.

"He ought to be taken up," added a third.

"Yes, yes," cried those in the house—honest people perhaps, but under the influence of the general panic; "he must be taken up, for he has been throwing poison into the wine-pots."

The words "He is a poisoner" soon spread through the group, which, at first composed of three or four persons, increased every instant around the door of the wine-shop. A dull, menacing clamor began to rise from the crowd;

the first accuser, seeing his fears thus shared and almost justified, thought he was acting like a good and courageous citizen in taking Goliath by the collar, and saying to him: "Come and explain yourself at the guard-house, villain!"

The giant, already provoked at insults of which he did not perceive the real meaning, was exasperated at this sudden attack; yielding to his natural brutality, he knocked his adversary down upon the counter, and began to hammer him with his fists. During this collision, several bottles and two or three panes of glass were broken with much noise, whilst the woman of the house, more and more frightened, cried out with all her might; "Help! a poisoner! Help! murder!"

At the sound of the breaking windows and these cries of distress, the passers-by, of whom the greater number believed in the stories about the poisoners, rushed into the shop to aid in securing Goliath. But the latter, thanks to his herculean strength, after struggling for some moments with seven or eight persons, knocked down two of his most furious assailants, disengaged himself from the others, drew near the counter, and, taking a vigorous spring, rushed head-foremost, like a bull about to butt, upon the crowd that blocked up the door; then, forcing a passage, by the help of his enormous shoulders and athletic arms, he made his way into the street, and ran with all speed in the direction of the square of Nôtre-Dame, his garments torn, his head bare, and his countenance pale and full of rage. Immediately, a number of persons from amongst the crowd started in pursuit of Goliath, and a hundred voices exclaimed: "Stop—stop the poisoner!"

Hearing these cries, and seeing a man draw near with a wild and troubled look, a butcher, who happened to be passing with his large, empty tray on his head, threw it against Goliath's shins, and taken by surprise, he stumbled and fell. The butcher, thinking he had performed as heroic an action as if he had encountered a mad dog, flung himself on Goliath, and rolled over with him on the pavement, exclaiming: "Help! it is a poisoner! Help! help!" This scene took place not far from the Cathedral, but at some distance from the crowd which was pressing round the hospital gate, as well as from the eating-house in which the masquerade of the cholera then was. The day was now drawing to a close. On the piercing call of the butcher, several groups, at the head of which were Ciboule and the quarryman, flew towards the scene of the struggle, while those who had

pursued the pretended poisoner from the Rue de la Calandre, reached the square on their side.

At sight of this threatening crowd advancing towards him, Goliath, whilst he continued to defend himself against the butcher, who held him with the tenacity of a bull-dog, felt that he was lost unless he could rid himself of this adversary before the arrival of the rest; with a furious blow of the fist, therefore, he broke the jaw of the butcher, who just then was above him, and, disengaging himself from his hold, he rose, and staggered a few steps forward. Suddenly he stopped. He saw that he was surrounded. Behind him rose the walls of the cathedral: to the right and left, and in front of him, advanced a hostile multitude. The groans uttered by the butcher, who had just been lifted from the ground covered with blood, augmented the fury of the populace.

This was a terrible moment for Goliath: still standing alone in the centre of a ring that grew smaller every second, he saw on all sides angry enemies rushing towards him, and uttering cries of death. As the wild boar turns round once or twice, before resolving to stand at bay and face the devouring pack, Goliath, struck with terror, made one or two abrupt and wavering movements. Then, as he abandoned the possibility of flight, instinct told him that he had no mercy to expect from a crowd given up to blind and savage fury—a fury the more pitiless as it was believed to be legitimate. Goliath determined, therefore, at least to sell his life dearly; he sought for a knife in his pocket, but, not finding it, he threw out his left leg in an athletic posture, and, holding up his muscular arms, hard and stiff as bars of iron, waited with intrepidity for the shock.

The first who approached Goliath was Ciboule. The hag, heated and out of breath, instead of rushing upon him, paused, stooped down, and taking off one of the large wooden shoes that she wore, hurled it at the giant's head with so much force and with so true an aim that it struck him right in the eye, which hung half out of its socket. Goliath pressed his hands to his face, and uttered a cry of excruciating pain.

"I've made him squint!" said Ciboule, with a burst of laughter.

Goliath, maddened by the pain, instead of waiting for the attack, which the mob still hesitated to begin, so greatly were they awed by his appearance of herculean strength—the only adversary worthy to cope with him being the

quarryman, who had been borne to a distance by the surging of the crowd—Goliath, in his rage, rushed headlong upon the nearest. Such a struggle was too unequal to last long; but despair redoubled the Colossus's strength, and the combat was for a moment terrible. The unfortunate man did not fall at once. For some seconds, almost buried amid a swarm of furious assailants, one saw now his mighty arm rise and fall like a sledge hammer, beating upon skulls and faces, and now his enormous head, livid and bloody, drawn back by some of the combatants hanging to his tangled hair. Here and there sudden openings and violent oscillations of the crowd bore witness to the incredible energy of Goliath's defence. But when the quarryman succeeded in reaching him, Goliath was overpowered and thrown down. A long, savage cheer in triumph announced this fall; for, under such circumstances, to "*go under*" is "to die." Instantly a thousand breathless and angry voices repeated the cry of "Death to the poisoner!"

Then began one of those scenes of massacre and torture, worthy of cannibals, horrible to relate, and the more incredible, that they happen almost always in the presence, and often with the aid, of honest and humane people, who, blinded by false notions and stupid prejudices, allow themselves to be led into all sorts of barbarity, under the idea of performing an act of inexorable justice. As it frequently happens, the sight of the blood which flowed in torrents from Goliath's wounds inflamed to madness the rage of his assailants. A hundred fists struck at the unhappy man; he was stamped under foot; his face and chest were beaten in. Ever and anon, in the midst of furious cries of "Death to the poisoner!" heavy blows were audible, followed by stifled groans. It was a frightful butchery. Each individual, yielding to a sanguinary frenzy, came in turn to strike his blow, or to tear off his morsel of flesh. Women—yes, women—mothers!—came to spend their rage on this mutilated form.

There was one moment of frightful terror. With his face all bruised and covered with mud, his garments in rags, his chest bare, red, gaping with wounds—Goliath, availing himself of a moment's weariness on the part of his assassins, who believed him already finished, succeeded, by one of those convulsive starts frequent in the last agony, in raising himself to his feet for a few seconds; then, blind with wounds and loss of blood, striking about his arms in the air as if to parry blows that were no longer struck, he muttered

these words, which came from his mouth, accompanied by a crimson torrent: "Mercy! I am no poisoner. Mercy!" This sort of resurrection produced so great an effect on the crowd, that for an instant they fell back affrighted. The clamor ceased, and a small space was left around the victim. Some hearts began even to feel pity; when the quarryman, seeing Goliath blinded with blood, groping before him with his hands, exclaimed in ferocious allusion to a well-known game: "Now for blind-man's-buff."

Then, with a violent kick, he again threw down the victim, whose head struck twice heavily on the pavement.

Just as the giant fell, a voice from amongst the crowd exclaimed: "It is Goliath! stop! he is innocent."

It was Father d'Aigrigny, who, yielding to a generous impulse, was making violent efforts to reach the foremost rank of the actors in this scene, and who cried out, as he came nearer, pale, indignant, menacing: "You are cowards and murderers! This man is innocent. I know him. You shall answer for his life."

These vehement words were received with loud murmurs.

"You know that poisoner," cried the quarryman, seizing the Jesuit by the collar; "then perhaps you are a poisoner too."

"Wretch," exclaimed Father d'Aigrigny, endeavoring to shake himself loose from the grasp, "do you dare to lay hand upon me?"

"Yes, I dare do anything," answered the quarryman.

"He knows him: he's a poisoner like the other," cried the crowd, pressing round the two adversaries; whilst Goliath, who had fractured his skull in the fall, uttered a long death-rattle.

At a sudden movement of Father d'Aigrigny, who disengaged himself from the quarryman, a large glass phial of peculiar form, very thick, and filled with a greenish liquor, fell from his pocket, and rolled close to the dying Goliath. At sight of this phial, many voices exclaimed together: "It is poison! Only see! He had poison upon him."

The clamor redoubled at this accusation, and they pressed so close to Abbé d'Aigrigny, that he exclaimed: "Do not touch me! do not approach me!"

"If he is a poisoner," said a voice, "no more mercy for him than for the other."

"I a poisoner?" said the abbé, struck with horror.

Ciboule had darted upon the phial; the quarryman seized

it from her, uncorked it, and presenting it to Father d'Aigrigny, said to him: "Now tell us! what is that?"

"It is not poison," cried Father d'Aigrigny.

"Then drink it!" returned the quarryman.

"Yes, yes! let him drink it!" cried the mob.

"Never," answered Father d'Aigrigny, in extreme alarm. And he drew back as he spoke, pushing away the phial with his hand.

"Do you see? It *is* poison. He dares not drink it," they exclaimed. Hemmed in on every side, Father d'Aigrigny stumbled against the body of Goliath.

"My friends," cried the Jesuit, who, without being a poisoner, found himself exposed to a terrible alternative, for his phial contained aromatic salts of extraordinary strength, designed for a preservative against the cholera, and as dangerous to swallow as any poison, "my good friends, you are in error. I conjure you, in the name of heaven——"

"If that is not poison, drink it!" interrupted the quarryman, as he again offered the bottle to the Jesuit.

"If he does not drink it, death to the poisoner of the poor!"

"Yes!—death to him! death to him!"

"Unhappy men!" cried Father d'Aigrigny, whilst his hair stood on end with terror; "do you mean to murder me?"

"What about all those, that you and your mate have killed, you wretch?"

"But it is not true—and——"

"Drink, then!" repeated the inflexible quarryman; "I ask you for the last time."

"To drink that would be death," cried Father d'Aigrigny.

"Oh! only hear the wretch!" cried the mob, pressing closer to him; he has confessed—he has confessed!"

"He has betrayed himself!" *

"He said, 'to drink that would be death!'"

"But listen to me!" cried the abbé, clasping his hands together; "this phial is——"

Furious cries interrupted Father d'Aigrigny. "Ciboule, make an end of that one!" cried the quarryman, spurning Goliath with his foot. "I will begin this one!" And he seized Father d'Aigrigny by the throat.

At these words, two different groups formed themselves.

* This fact is historical. A man was murdered because a phial full of ammonia was found upon him. On his refusal to drink it, the populace, persuaded that the bottle contained poison, tore him to pieces.

One, led by Ciboule, "made an end" of Goliath, with kicks and blows, stones and wooden shoes; his body was soon reduced to a horrible thing, mutilated, nameless, formless—a mere inert mass of filth and mangled flesh. Ciboule gave her cloak, which they tied to one of the dislocated ankles of the body, and thus dragged it to the parapet of the quay. There, with shouts of ferocious joy, they pre ipitated the bloody remains into the river. Now who does not shudder at the thought that, in a time of popular commotion, a word, a single word, spoken imprudently, even by an honest man, and without hatred, will suffice to provoke so horrible a murder.

"Perhaps it is a poisoner!" said one of the drinkers in the tavern of the Rue de la Calandre—nothing more—and Goliath had been pitilessly murdered.

What imperious reasons for penetrating the lowest depths of the masses with instruction and with light—to enable unfortunate creatures to defend themselves from so many stupid prejudices, so many fatal superstitions, so much implacable fanaticism!—How can we ask for calmness, reflection, self-control, or the sentiment of justice from abandoned beings, whom ignorance has brutalized, and misery depraved, and suffering made ferocious, and of whom society takes no thought, except when it chains them to the galleys, or binds them ready for the executioner! The terrible cry which had so startled Morok was uttered by Father d'Aigrigny as the quarryman laid his formidable hand upon him, saying to Ciboule: "Make an end of that one—I will begin this one!"

CHAPTER XXIV.

IN THE CATHEDRAL.

Night was almost come, as the mutilated body of Goliath was thrown into the river. The oscillations of the mob had carried into the street, which runs along the left side of the cathedral, the group into whose power Father d'Aigrigny had fallen. Having succeeded in freeing himself from the grasp of the quarryman, but still closely pressed by the multitude that surrounded him, crying, "Death to the poisoner!" he retreated step by step, trying to parry the blows that were dealt him. By presence of mind, address, and courage, recovering at that critical moment his old mili-

tary energy, he had hitherto been able to resist and to remain firm on his feet—knowing, by the example of Goliath, that to fall was to die. Though he had little hope of being heard to any purpose, the abbé continued to call for help with all his might. Disputing the ground inch by inch, he manœuvred so as to draw near one of the lateral walls of the church, and at length succeeded in ensconcing himself in a corner formed by the projection of a buttress, and close by a little door.

This position was rather favorable. Leaning with his back against the wall, Father d Aigrigny was sheltered from the attacks of a portion of his assailants. But the quarryman, wishing to deprive him of this last chance of safety, rushed upon him, with the intention of dragging him out into the circle, where he would have been trampled under foot. The fear of death gave Father d'Aigrigny extraordinary strength, and he was able once more to repulse the quarryman, and remain entrenched in the corner where he had taken refuge. The resistance of the victim redoubled the rage of the assailants. Cries of murderous import resounded with new violence. The quarryman again rushed upon Father d'Aigrigny, saying, "Follow me, friends! this lasts too long. Let us make an end of it."

Father d'Aigrigny saw that he was lost. His strength was exhausted, and he felt himself sinking; his legs trembled under him, and a cloud obscured his sight; the howling of the furious mob began to sound dull upon his ear. The effects of violent contusions, received during the struggle, both on the head and chest, were now very perceptible. Two or three times, a mixture of blood and foam rose to the lips of the abbé; his position was a desperate one.

"To be slaughtered by these brutes, after escaping death so often in war!" Such was the thought of Father d'Aigrigny, as the quarryman rushed upon him.

Suddenly, at the very moment when the abbé, yielding to the instinct of self-preservation, uttered one last call for help, in a heart-piercing voice, the door against which he leaned opened behind him, and a firm hand caught hold of him, and pulled him into the church. Thanks to this movement, performed with the rapidity of lightning, the quarryman, thrown forward in his attempt to seize Father d'Aigrigny, could not check his progress, and found himself just opposite to the person who had come, as it were, to take the place of the victim.

The quarryman stopped short, and then fell back a couple

of paces, so much was he amazed at this sudden apparition, and impressed, like the rest of the crowd, with a vague feeling of admiration and respect at sight of him who had come so miraculously to the aid of Father d'Aigrigny. It was Gabriel. The young missionary remained standing on the threshold of the door. His long black cassock was half lost in the shadows of the cathedral; whilst his angelic countenance, with its border of long light hair, now pale and agitated by pity and grief, was illumined by the last faint rays of twilight. This countenance shone with so divine a beauty, and expressed such touching and tender compassion, that the crowd felt awed, as, with his large blue eyes full of tears, and his hands clasped together, he exclaimed, in a sonorous voice: "Have mercy, my brethren! Be humane—be just!"

Recovering from his first feeling of surprise and involuntary emotion, the quarryman advanced a step towards Gabriel, and said to him: "No mercy for the poisoner! we must have him! Give him up to us, or we go and take him!"

"You cannot think of it, my brethren," answered Gabriel; "the church is a sacred place—a place of refuge for the persecuted."

"We would drag our poisoner from the altar!" answered the quarryman, roughly; "so give him up to us."

"Listen to me, my brethren," said Gabriel, extending his arms towards them.

"Down with the shaveling!" cried the quarryman; "let us go in and hunt him up in the church!"

"Yes, yes!" cried the mob, again led away by the violence of this wretch, "down with the black gown!"

"They are all of a piece!"

"Down with them!"

"Let us do as we did at the archbishop's!"

"Or at Saint-Germain-l'Auxerrois!"

"What do our likes care for a church?"

"If the priests defend the poisoners, we'll pitch them into the water too!"

"Yes, yes!"

"I'll show you the lead!" cried the quarryman; and followed by Ciboule, and a good number of determined men, he rushed towards Gabriel.

The missionary, who for some moments had watched the increasing fury of the crowd, had foreseen this movement; hastily retreating into the church, he succeeded, in spite of the efforts of the assailants, in nearly closing the door, and

in barricading it by the help of a wooden bar, which he held in such a manner as would enable the door to resist for a few minutes.

Whilst he thus defended the entrance, Gabriel shouted to Father d'Aigrigny: "Fly, father! fly through the vestry! the other doors are fastened."

The Jesuit, overpowered by fatigue, covered with contusions, bathed in cold sweat, feeling his strength altogether fail, and too soon fancying himself in safety, had sunk, half fainting, into a chair. At the voice of Gabriel, he rose with difficulty, and, with a trembling step, endeavored to reach the choir, separated from the rest of the church by an iron railing.

"Quick, father!" added Gabriel, in alarm, using every effort to maintain the door, which was now vigorously assailed. "Make haste! In a few minutes it will be too late. All alone!" continued the missionary, in despair, "alone, to arrest the progress of these madmen!"

He was indeed alone. At the first outbreak of the attack, three or four sacristans and other members of the establishment were in the church; but, struck with terror, and remembering the sack of the archbishop's palace, and of Saint-Germain-l'Auxerrois, they had immediately taken flight. Some of them had concealed themselves in the organ-loft and others fled into the vestry, the doors of which they locked after them, thus cutting off the retreat of Gabriel and Father d'Aigrigny. The latter, bent double by pain, yet roused by the missionary's portentive warning, helping himself on by means of the chairs he met with on his passage, made vain efforts to reach the choir railing. After advancing a few steps, vanquished by his suffering, he staggered and fell upon the pavement, deprived of sense and motion. At the same moment, Gabriel, in spite of the incredible energy with which the desire to save Father d'Aigrigny had inspired him, felt the door giving way beneath the formidable pressure from without.

Turning his head, to see if the Jesuit had at least quitted the church, Gabriel, to his great alarm, perceived that he was lying motionless at a few steps from the choir. To abandon the half-broken door, to run to Father d'Aigrigny, to lift him in his arms, and drag him within the railing of the choir, was for the young priest an action rapid as thought; for he closed the gate of the choir just at the instant that the quarryman and his band, having finished breaking down the door, rushed in a body into the church.

Standing in front of the choir, with his arms crossed upon his breast, Gabriel waited calmly and intrepidly for this mob, still more exasperated by such unexpected resistance.

The door once forced, the assailants rushed in with great violence. But hardly had they entered the church, than a strange scene took place. It was nearly dark; only a few silver lamps shed their pale light round the sanctuary, whose far outlines disappeared in the shadow. On suddenly entering the immense cathedral, dark, silent, and deserted, the most audacious were struck with awe, almost with fear, in presence of the imposing grandeur of that stony solitude. Outcries and threats died away on the lips of the most furious. They seemed to dread awaking the echoes of those enormous arches, those black vaults, from which oozed a sepulchral dampness, which chilled their brows, inflamed with anger, and fell upon their shoulders like a mantle of ice.

Religious tradition, routine, habit, the memories of childhood, have so much influence upon men, that hardly had they entered the church, than several of the quarryman's followers respectfully took off their hats, bowed their bare heads, and walked along cautiously, as if to check the noise of their footsteps on the sounding stones. Then they exchanged a few words in a low and fearful whisper. Others timidly raised their eyes to the far heights of the topmost arches of that gigantic building, now lost in obscurity, and felt almost frightened to see themselves so little in the midst of that immensity of darkness. But at the first joke of the quarryman, who broke this respectful silence, the emotion soon passed away.

"Blood and thunder!" cried he; "are you fetching breath to sing vespers? If they had wine in the font, well and good!"

These words were received with a burst of savage laughter. "All this time the villain will escape!" said one.

"And we shall be done," added Ciboule.

"One would think we had cowards here, who are afraid of the sacristans!" cried the quarryman.

"Never!" replied the others in chorus; "we fear nobody."

"Forward!"

"Yes, yes—forward!" was repeated on all sides. And the animation, which had been calmed down for a moment, was redoubled in the midst of renewed tumult. Some moments after, the eyes of the assailants, becoming accustomed to the twilight, were able to distinguish in the midst of the faint halo shed around by a silver lamp, the imposing coun-

tenance of Gabriel, as he stood before the iron railing of the choir.

"The poisoner is here, hid in some corner," cried the quarryman. "We must force this parson to give us back the villain."

"He shall answer for him!"

"He took him into the church."

"He shall pay for both, if we do not find the other!"

As the first impression of involuntary respect was effaced from the minds of the crowd, their voices rose the louder, and their faces became the more savage and threatening, because they all felt ashamed of their momentary hesitation and weakness.

"Yes, yes!" cried many voices, trembling with rage, "we must have the life of one or the other!"

"Or of both!"

"So much the worse for this priest, if he wants to prevent us from serving out our poisoner!"

"Death to him! death to him!"

With this burst of ferocious yells, which were fearfully re-echoed from the groined arches of the cathedral, the mob, maddened by rage, rushed towards the choir, at the door of which Gabriel was standing. The young missionary, who, when placed on the cross by the savages of the Rocky Mountains, yet entreated heaven to spare his executioners, had too much courage in his heart, too much charity in his soul, not to risk his life a thousand times over to save Father d'Aigrigny's—the very man who had betrayed him by such cowardly and cruel hypocrisy.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE MURDERERS.

The quarryman, followed by his gang, ran towards Gabriel, who had advanced a few paces from the choir-railing, and exclaimed, his eyes sparkling with rage: "Where is the poisoner? We will have him!"

"Who has told you, my brethren, that he is a poisoner?" replied Gabriel, with his deep, sonorous voice. "A poisoner! Where are the proofs—witnesses or victims?"

"Enough of that stuff! we are not here for confession," brutally answered the quarryman, advancing towards him

in a threatening manner. "Give up the man to us; he shall be forthcoming, unless you choose to stand in his shoes?"

"Yes, yes!" exclaimed several voices; "they are 'in' with one another! One or the other we will have!"

"Very well, then; since it is so," said Gabriel, raising his head, and advancing with calmness, resignation, and fearlessness; "he or me," added he;—"it seems to make no difference to you—you are determined to have blood—take mine, and I will pardon you, my friends; for a fatal delusion has unsettled your reason."

These words of Gabriel, his courage, the nobleness of his attitude, the beauty of his countenance, had made an impression on some of the assailants, when suddenly a voice exclaimed: "Look! there is the poisoner, behind the railing!"

"Where—where?" cried they.

"There—don't you see?—stretched on the floor."

On hearing this, the mob, which had hitherto formed a compact mass, in the sort of passage separating the two sides of the nave, between the rows of chairs, dispersed in every direction, to reach the railing of the choir, the last and only barrier that now sheltered Father d'Aigrigny. During this manœuvre, the quarryman, Ciboule, and others, advanced towards Gabriel, exclaiming, with ferocious joy: "This time we have him. Death to the poisoner!"

To save Father d'Aigrigny, Gabriel would have allowed himself to be massacred at the entrance of the choir; but, a little further on, the railing, not above four feet in height, would in another instant be scaled or broken through. The missionary lost all hope of saving the Jesuit from a frightful death. Yet he exclaimed: "Stop, poor deluded people!"—and, extending his arms, he threw himself in front of the crowd.

His words, gesture, and countenance, were expressive of an authority at once so affectionate and so fraternal, that there was a momentary hesitation amongst the mob. But to this hesitation soon succeeded the most furious cries of "Death! death!"

"You cry for his death?" cried Gabriel, growing still paler.

"Yes! yes!"

"Well, let him die," cried the missionary, inspired with a sudden thought; "let him die on the instant!"

These words of the young priest struck the crowd with

amazement. For a few moments they all stood mute, motionless, and as it were, paralyzed, looking at Gabriel in stupid astonishment.

"This man is guilty, you say," resumed the young missionary, in a voice trembling with emotion. "You have condemned him without proof, without witnesses—no matter, he must die. You reproach him with being a poisoner; where are his victims? You cannot tell—but no matter; he is condemned. You refuse to hear his defense, the sacred right of every accused person—no matter; the sentence is pronounced. You are at once his accusers, judges, and executioners. Be it so!—You have never seen till now this unfortunate man, he has done you no harm, he has perhaps not done harm to any one—yet you take upon yourselves the terrible responsibility of his death—understand me well—of his death. Be it so then! your conscience will absolve you—I will believe it. He must die; the sacredness of God's house will not save him——"

"No, no!" cried many furious voices.

"No," resumed Gabriel, with increasing warmth; "no, you have determined to shed his blood, and you will shed it, even in the Lord's temple. It is, you say, your right. You are doing an act of terrible justice. But why then so many vigorous arms to make an end of one dying man? Why these outcries? this fury? this violence? Is it thus that the people, the strong and equitable people, are wont to execute their judgments? No, no; when, sure of their right, they strike their enemies, it is with the calmness of the judge, who, in freedom of soul and conscience, passes sentence. No, the strong and equitable people do not deal their blows like men blind or mad, uttering cries of rage, as if to drown the sense of some cowardly and horrible murder. No, it is not thus that they exercise the formidable right, to which you now lay claim—for you will have it——"

"Yes, we will have it!" shouted the quarryman, Ciboule, and others of the more pitiless portion of the mob; whilst a great number remained silent, struck with the words of Gabriel, who had just painted to them, in such lively colors, the frightful act they were about to commit.

"Yes," resumed the quarryman, "it is our right; we have determined to kill the poisoner!"

So saying, and with bloodshot eyes, and flushed cheek, the wretch advanced at the head of a resolute group, making a gesture as though he would have pushed aside Gabriel, who was still standing in front of the railing. But instead

of resisting the bandit, the missionary advanced a couple of steps to meet him, took him by the arm, and said in a firm voice: "Come!"

And dragging, as it were, with him the stupefied quarryman, whose companions did not venture to follow at the moment, struck dumb as they were by this new incident, Gabriel rapidly traversed the space which separated him from the choir, opened the iron gate, and, still holding the quarryman by the arm, led him up to the prostrate form of Father d'Aigrigny, and said to him: "There is the victim. He is condemned. Strike!"

"I!" cried the quarryman, hesitating; "I—all alone!"

"Oh!" replied Gabriel, with bitterness, "there is no danger. You can easily finish him. Look! he is broken down with suffering; he has hardly a breath of life left; he will make no resistance. Do not be afraid!"

The quarryman remained motionless, whilst the crowd, strangely impressed with this incident, approached a little nearer the railing, without daring to come within the gate.

"Strike then!" resumed Gabriel, addressing the quarryman, whilst he pointed to the crowd with a solemn gesture; "there are the judges; you are the executioner."

"No!" cried the quarryman, drawing back, and turning away his eyes; "I'm not the executioner—not I!"

The crowd remained silent. For a few moments, not a word, not a cry, disturbed the stillness of the solemn cathedral. In a desperate case, Gabriel had acted with a profound knowledge of the human heart. When the multitude, inflamed with blind rage, rushes with ferocious clamor upon a single victim, and each man strikes his blow, this dreadful species of combined murder appears less horrible to each, because they all share in the common crime; and then the shouts, the sight of blood, the desperate defence of the man they massacre, finish by producing a sort of ferocious intoxication; but, amongst all those furious madmen, who take part in the homicide, select one, and place him face to face with the victim, no longer capable of resistance, and say to him, "Strike!"—he will hardly ever dare to do so.

It was thus with the quarryman; the wretch trembled at the idea of committing a murder in cold blood, "all alone." The preceding scene had passed very rapidly; amongst the companions of the quarryman, nearest to the railing, some did not understand an impression, which they would themselves have felt as strongly as this bold man, if it had been said to them: "Do the office of executioner!" These, there-

fore, began to murmur aloud at his weakness. "He dares not finish the poisoner," said one.

"The coward!"

"He is afraid."

"He draws back." Hearing these words, the quarryman ran to the gate, threw it wide open, and, pointing to Father d'Aigrigny, exclaimed: "If there is one here braver than I am, let him go and finish the job—let him be the executioner—come!"

On this proposal the murmurs ceased. A deep silence reigned once more in the cathedral. All those countenances, but now so furious, became sad, confused, almost frightened. The deluded mob began to appreciate the ferocious cowardice of the action it had been about to commit. Not one durst go alone to strike the half-expiring man. Suddenly, Father d'Aigrigny uttered a dying rattle, his head and one of his arms stirred with a convulsive movement, and then fell back upon the stones as if he had just expired.

Gabriel uttered a cry of anguish, and threw himself on his knees close to Father d'Aigrigny, exclaiming: "Great Heaven! he is dead!"

There is a singular variableness in the mind of a crowd, susceptible alike to good or evil impressions. At the heart-piercing cry of Gabriel, all these people, who, a moment before, had demanded, with loud uproar, the massacre of this man, felt touched with a sudden pity. The words "He is dead!" circulated in low whispers through the crowd, accompanied by a slight shudder, whilst Gabriel raised with one hand the victim's heavy head, and with the other sought to feel if the pulse still beat beneath the ice-cold skin.

"Mr. Curate," said the quarryman, bending towards Gabriel, "is there really no hope?"

The answer was waited for with anxiety, in the midst of deep silence. The people hardly ventured to exchange a few words in whispers.

"Blessed be God!" exclaimed Gabriel, suddenly. "His heart beats."

"His heart beats," repeated the quarryman, turning his head towards the crowd, to inform them of the good news.

"Oh! his heart beats!" repeated the others, in whispers.

"There is hope. We may yet save him," added Gabriel, with an expression of indescribable happiness.

"We may yet save him," repeated the quarryman, mechanically.

"We may yet save him," muttered the crowd.

"Quick, quick," resumed Gabriel, addressing the quarryman; "help me, brother. Let us carry him to a neighboring house, where he can have immediate aid."

The quarryman obeyed with readiness. Whilst the missionary lifted Father d'Aigrigny by holding him under the arms, the quarryman took the legs of the almost inanimate body. Together, they carried him outside of the choir. At sight of the formidable quarryman, aiding the young priest to render assistance to the man whom he had just before pursued with menaces of death, the multitude felt a sudden thrill of compassion. Yielding to the powerful influence of the words and example of Gabriel, they felt themselves deeply moved, and each became anxious to offer his services.

"Mr. Curate, he would perhaps be better on a chair, that one could carry upright," said Ciboule.

"Shall I go and fetch a stretcher from the hospital?" asked another.

"Mr. Curate, let me take your place; the body is too heavy for you."

"Don't trouble yourself," said a powerful man, approaching the missionary respectfully; "I can carry him alone."

"Shall I run and fetch a coach, Mr. Curate?" said a young vagabond, taking off his red cap.

"Right," said the quarryman; "run away, my buck!"

"But first, ask Mr. Curate if you are to go for a coach," said Ciboule, stopping the impatient messenger.

"True," added one of the bystanders; "we are here in a church, and Mr. Curate has the command. He is at home."

"Yes, yes; go at once, my child," said Gabriel to the obliging young vagabond.

Whilst the latter was making his way through the crowd, a voice said: "I've a little wicker-bottle of brandy; will that be of any use?"

"No doubt," answered Gabriel, hastily; "pray give it here. We can rub his temples with the spirit, and make him inhale a little."

"Pass the bottle," cried Ciboule; "but don't put your noses in it!" And, passed with caution from hand to hand, the flask reached Gabriel in safety.

Whilst waiting for the coming of the coach, Father d'Aigrigny had been seated on a chair. Whilst several good-natured people carefully supported the abbé, the missionary made him inhale a little brandy. In a few minutes, the spirit had a powerful influence on the Jesuit; he made some

slight movements, and his oppressed bosom heaved with a deep sigh.

"He is saved—he will live," cried Gabriel, in a triumphant voice; "he will live, my brothers!"

"Oh! glad to hear it!" exclaimed many voices.

"Oh, yes! be glad, my brothers!" repeated Gabriel; "for, instead of being weighed down with the remorse of crime, you will have a just and charitable action to remember. Let us thank God, that he has changed your blind fury into a sentiment of compassion! Let us pray to Him, that neither you nor those you love, may ever be exposed to such frightful danger as this unfortunate man has just escaped. Oh, my brothers!" added Gabriel, as he pointed to the image of Christ with touching emotion, which communicated itself the more easily to others from the expression of his angelic countenance; "oh, my brothers! let us never forget, that He, who died upon that cross for the defence of the oppressed, for the obscure children of the people like to ourselves, pronounced those affectionate words so sweet to the heart: 'Love ye one another!'—Let us never forget it; let us love and help one another, and we poor people shall then become better, happier, just. Love—yes, love ye one another—and fall prostrate before that Saviour, who is the God of all that are weak, oppressed, and suffering in this world!"

So saying, Gabriel knelt down. All present respectfully followed his example, such power was there in his simple and persuasive words. At this moment, a singular incident added to the grandeur of the scene. We have said that a few seconds before the quarryman and his band entered the body of the church, several persons had fled from it. Two of these had taken refuge in the organ-loft, from which retreat they had viewed the preceding scene, themselves remaining invisible. One of these persons was a young man charged with the care of the organ, and quite musician enough to play on it. Deeply moved by the unexpected turn of an event which at first appeared so tragical, and yielding to an artistical inspiration, this young man, at the moment when he saw the people kneeling with Gabriel, could not forbear striking the notes. Then a sort of harmonious sigh, at first almost insensible, seemed to rise from the midst of this immense cathedral, like a divine aspiration. As soft and aerial as the balmy vapor of incense, it mounted and spread through the lofty arches. Little by little, the faint, sweet sounds, though still as it were

covered, changed to an exquisite melody, religious, melancholy, and affectionate, which rose to heaven like a song of ineffable gratitude and love. And the notes were at first so faint, so covered, that the kneeling multitude had scarcely felt surprise, and had yielded insensibly to the irresistible influence of that enchanting harmony.

Then many an eye, until now dry and ferocious, became wet with tears—many hard hearts beat gently, as they remembered the words pronounced by Gabriel with so tender an accent: "Love ye one another!" It was at this moment that Father d'Aigrigny came to himself—and opened his eyes. He thought himself under the influence of a dream. He had lost his senses in sight of a furious populace, who, with insult and blasphemy on their lips, pursued him with cries of death even to the sanctuary of the temple. He opened his eyes—and, by the pale light of the sacred lamps, to the solemn music of the organ, he saw that crowd, just now so menacing and implacable, kneeling in mute and reverential emotion, and humbly bowing their heads before the majesty of the shrine.

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Some minutes after, Gabriel, carried almost in triumph on the shoulders of the crowd, entered the coach, in which Father d'Aigrigny, who by degrees had completely recovered his senses, was already reclining. By the order of the Jesuit, the coach stopped before the door of a house in the Rue de Vaugirard; he had the strength and courage to enter this dwelling alone; Gabriel was not admitted, but we shall conduct the reader thither.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE PATIENT.

At the end of the Rue de Vaugirard, there was then a very high wall, with only one small doorway in all its length. On opening this door, you entered a yard surrounded by a railing, with screens like Venetian blinds, to prevent your seeing between the rails. Crossing this courtyard, you come to a fine large garden, symmetrically planted, at the end of which stood a building two stories high, looking perfectly comfortable, without luxury, but with all that

cozy simplicity which betokens discreet opulence. A few days had elapsed since Father d'Aigrigny had been so courageously rescued by Gabriel from the popular fury. Three ecclesiastics, wearing black gowns, white bands, and square caps, were walking in the garden with a slow and measured step. The youngest seemed to be about thirty years of age; his countenance was pale, hollow, and impressed with a certain ascetic austerity. His two companions, aged between fifty or sixty, had, on the contrary, faces at once hypocritical and cunning; their round, rosy cheeks shone brightly in the sunshine, whilst their triple chins, buried in fat, descended in soft folds over the fine cambric of their bands. According to the rules of their order (they belonged to the Society of Jesus), which forbade their walking only two together, these three members of the brotherhood never quitted each other a moment.

"I fear," said one of the two, continuing a conversation already begun, and speaking of an absent person, "I fear, that the continual agitation to which the reverend father has been a prey, ever since he was attacked with the cholera, has exhausted his strength, and caused the dangerous relapse which now makes us fear for his life."

"They say," resumed the other, "that never was there seen anxiety like to his."

"And moreover," remarked the young priest, bitterly, "it is painful to think, that his reverence Father Rodin has given cause for scandal, by obstinately refusing to make a public confession, the day before yesterday, when his situation appeared so desperate, that, between two fits of delirium, it was thought right to propose to him to receive the last sacraments."

"His reverence declared that he was not so ill as they supposed," answered one of the fathers, "and that he would have the last duties performed when he thought necessary."

"The fact is, that for the last ten days, ever since he was brought here dying, his life has been, as it were, only a long and painful agony; and yet he continues to live."

"I watched by him during the first three days of his malady, with M. Rousselet, the pupil of Dr. Baleinier," resumed the youngest father; "he had hardly a moment's consciousness, and when the Lord did grant him a lucid interval, he employed it in detestable execrations against the fate which had confined him to his bed."

"It is said," resumed the other, "that Father Rodin

made answer to his Eminence Cardinal Malipieri, who came to persuade him to die in an exemplary manner, worthy of a son of Loyola, our blessed founder"—at these words, the three Jesuits bowed their heads together, as if they had been all moved by the same spring—"it is said, that Father Rodin made answer to his eminence: 'I do not need to confess publicly; I WANT TO LIVE, AND I *will* LIVE.'"

"I did not hear that," said the young priest, with an indignant air; "but if Father Rodin really made use of such expressions, it is——"

Here, no doubt, reflection came to him just in time, for he stole a sidelong glance at his two silent, impassible companions, and added: "It is a great misfortune for his soul; but I am certain, his reverence has been slandered."

"It was only as a calumnious report, that I mentioned those words," said the other priest, exchanging a glance with his companion.

One of the garden gates opened, and one of the three reverend fathers exclaimed, at the sight of the personage who now entered: "Oh! here is his Eminence Cardinal Malipieri, coming to pay a visit to Father Rodin."

"May this visit of his eminence," said the young priest, calmly, "be more profitable to Father Rodin than the last!"

Cardinal Malipieri was crossing the garden, on his way to the apartment occupied by Rodin.

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Cardinal Malipieri, whom we saw assisting at the sort of council held at the Princess de Saint-Dizier's, now on his way to Rodin's apartment, was dressed as a layman, but enveloped in an ample pelisse of puce-colored satin, which exhaled a strong odor of camphor, for the prelate had taken care to surround himself with all sorts of anti-cholera specifics. Having reached the second story of the house, the cardinal knocked at a little gray door. Nobody answering, he opened it, and, like a man to whom the locality was well known, passed through a sort of antechamber, and entered a room in which was a turn-up bed. On a black wood table were many phials, which had contained different medicines. The prelate's countenance seemed uneasy and morose; his complexion was still yellow and bilious; the brown circle which surrounded his black, squinting eyes appeared still darker than usual.

Pausing a moment, he looked round him almost in fear, and several times stopped to smell at his anti-cholera bottle.

Then, seeing he was alone, he approached a glass over the chimney-piece, and examined with much attention the color of his tongue; after some minutes spent in this careful investigation, with the result of which he appeared tolerably satisfied, he took some preservative lozenges out of a golden box, and allowed them to melt in his mouth, whilst he closed his eyes with a sanctified air. Having taken these sanitary precautions, and again pressed his bottle to his nose, the prelate prepared to enter the third room, when he heard a tolerably loud noise through the thin partition which separated him from it, and, stopping to listen, all that was said in the next apartment easily reached his ear.

"Now that my wounds are dressed, I will get up," said a weak, but sharp and imperious voice.

"Do not think of it, reverend father," was answered in a stronger tone; "it is impossible."

"You shall see if it is impossible," replied the other voice.

"But, reverend father, you will kill yourself. You are not in a state to get up. You will expose yourself to a mortal relapse. I cannot consent to it."

To these words succeeded the noise of a faint struggle, mingled with groans more angry than plaintive, and the voice resumed: "No, no, father; for your own safety, I will not leave your clothes within your reach. It is almost time for your medicine; I will go and prepare it for you."

Almost immediately after, the door opened, and the prelate saw enter a man of about twenty-five years of age, carrying on his arm an old olive great-coat and threadbare black trousers, which he threw down upon a chair.

This personage was Ange Modeste Rousselet, chief pupil of Dr. Baleinier; the countenance of the young practitioner was mild, humble, and reserved; his hair, very short in front, flowed down upon his neck behind. He made a slight start in surprise on perceiving the cardinal, and bowed twice very low, without raising his eyes.

"Before anything else," said the prelate, with his marked Italian accent, still holding to his nose his bottle of camphor, "have any choleraic symptoms returned?"

"No, my lord; the pernicious fever, which succeeded the attack of cholera, still continues."

"Very good. But will not the reverend father be reasonable? What was the noise that I just heard?"

"His reverence wished absolutely to get up and dress himself; but his weakness is so great, that he could not have taken two steps from the bed. He is devoured by im-

patience, and we fear that this agitation will cause a mortal relapse."

"Has Dr. Baleinier been here this morning?"

"He has just left, my lord."

"What does he think of the patient?"

"He finds him in the most alarming state, my lord. The night was so bad, that he was extremely uneasy this morning. Father Rodin is at one of those critical junctures, when a few hours may decide the life or death of the patient. Dr. Baleinier is now gone to fetch what is necessary for a very painful operation, which he is about to perform on the reverend father."

"Has Father d'Aigrigny been told of this?"

"Father d'Aigrigny is himself very unwell, as your eminence knows; he has not been able to leave his bed for the last three days."

"I inquired about him as I came up," answered the prelate, "and I shall see him directly. But, to return to Father Rodin, have you sent for his confessor, since he is in a desperate state, and about to undergo a serious operation?"

"Dr. Baleinier spoke a word to him about it, as well as about the last sacraments; but Father Rodin exclaimed, with great irritation, that they did not leave him a moment's peace, that he had as much care as any one for his salvation, and that——"

"Per Bacco! I am not thinking of him," cried the cardinal, interrupting Ange Modeste Rousselet with his pagan oath, and raising his sharp voice to a still higher key; "I am not thinking of him, but of the interests of the Company. It is indispensable that the reverend father should receive the sacraments with the most splendid solemnity, and that his end should not only be Christian, but exemplary. All the people in the house, and even strangers, should be invited to the spectacle, so that his edifying death may produce an excellent sensation."

"That is what Fathers Grison and Brunet have already endeavored to persuade his reverence, my lord; but your Eminence knows with what impatience Father Rodin received this advice, and Dr. Baleinier did not venture to persist, for fear of advancing a fatal crisis."

"Well, I will venture to do it; for in these times of revolutionary impiety, a solemnly Christian death would produce a very salutary effect on the public. It would indeed be proper to make the necessary preparations to embalm the reverend father: he might then lie in state for some

days, with lighted tapers, according to Romish custom. My secretary would furnish the design for the bier; it would be very splendid and imposing; from his position in the Order, Father Rodin is entitled to have everything in the most sumptuous style. He must have at least six hundred tapers, and a dozen funeral lamps, burning spirits of wine, to hang just over the body, and light it from above: the effect would be excellent. We must also distribute little tracts to the people, concerning the pious and ascetic life of his reverence——"

Here a sudden noise, like that of some piece of metal thrown angrily on the floor, was heard from the next room, in which was the sick man, and interrupted the prelate in his description.

"I hope Father Rodin has not heard you talk of embalming him, my lord," said Rousselet, in a whisper: "his bed touches the partition, and almost everything is audible through it."

"If Father Rodin has heard me," answered the cardinal, sinking his voice, and retiring to the other end of the room, "this circumstance will enable me to enter at once on the business; but, in any case, I persist in believing that the embalming and the lying in state are required to make a good effect upon the public. The people are already frightened at the cholera, and such funeral pomp would have no small influence on the imagination."

"I would venture to observe to your Eminence, that here the laws are opposed to such exhibitions."

"The laws—always the laws!" said the cardinal, angrily; "has not Rome also her laws? And is not every priest a subject of Rome? Is it not time——"

But, not choosing, doubtless, to begin a more explicit conversation with the young doctor, the prelate resumed, "We will talk of this hereafter. But, tell me, since my last visit, has the reverend father had any fresh attacks of delirium?"

"Yes, my lord; here is the note, as your Eminence commanded." So saying, Rousselet delivered a paper to the prelate. We will inform the reader that this part of the conversation between Rousselet and the cardinal was carried on at a distance from the partition, so that Rodin could hear nothing of it, whilst that which related to the embalming had been perfectly audible to him.

The cardinal, having received the note from Rousselet, perused it with an expression of lively curiosity. When he had finished, he crumpled it in his hand, and said, without

attempting to dissemble his vexation, "Always nothing but incoherent expressions. Not two words together, from which you can draw any reasonable conclusion. One would really think this man had the power to control himself even in his delirium, and to rave about insignificant matters only."

Then, addressing Rousselet, "You are sure that you have reported everything that escaped from him during his delirium?"

"With the exception of the same phrases, that he repeated over and over again, your Eminence may be assured that I have not omitted a single word, however unmeaning."

"Show me into Father Rodin's room," said the prelate, after a moment's silence.

"But, my lord," answered the young doctor, with some hesitation, "the fit has only left him about an hour, and the reverend father is still very weak."

"The more's the reason," replied the prelate, somewhat indiscreetly. Then, recollecting himself, he added, "He will the better appreciate the consolations I have to offer. Should he be asleep, awake him, and announce my visit."

"I have only orders to receive from your Eminence," said Rousselet, bowing, and entering the next room.

Left alone, the cardinal said to himself, with a pensive air, "I always come back to that. When he was suddenly attacked by the cholera, Father Rodin believed himself poisoned by order of the Holy See. He must then have been plotting something very formidable against Rome, to entertain so abominable a fear. Can our suspicions be well founded? Is he acting secretly and powerfully on the Sacred College? But then for what end? This it has been impossible to penetrate, so faithfully has the secret been kept by his accomplices. I had hoped that, during his delirium, he would let slip some word that would put us on the trace of what we are so much interested to discover. With so restless and active a mind, delirium is often the exaggeration of some dominant idea; yet here I have the report of five different fits—and nothing—no, nothing but vague, unconnected phrases."

The return of Rousselet put an end to these reflections. "I am sorry to inform my lord that the reverend father obstinately refuses to see any one. He says that he requires absolute repose. Though very weak, he has a savage and angry look, and I should not be surprised if he overheard your Eminence talk about embalming him."

The cardinal, interrupting Rousselet, said to him, "Did Father Rodin have his last fit of delirium in the night?"

"Between three and half-past five this morning, my lord."

"Between three and half-past five," repeated the prelate, as if he wished to impress this circumstance on his memory, "the attack presented no particular symptoms?"

"No, my lord; it consisted of rambling, incoherent talk, as your Fminence may see by this note."

Then, as he perceived the prelate approaching Father Rodin's door, Rousselet added, "The reverend father will positively see no one, my lord; he requires rest, to prepare for the operation; it might be dangerous——"

Without attending to these observations, the cardinal entered Rodin's chamber. It was a tolerably large room, lighted by two windows, and simply but commodiously furnished. Two logs were burning slowly in the fireplace, in which stood a coffee-pot, a vessel containing mustard-poultice, etc. On the chimney-piece were several pieces of rag, and some linen bandages. The room was full of that faint, chemical odor peculiar to the chambers of the sick, mingled with so putrid a stench, that the cardinal stopped at the door a moment, before he ventured to advance further. As the three reverend fathers had mentioned in their walk, Rodin lived because he had said to himself, "I want to live, and I will live."

For, as men of timid imaginations and cowardly minds often die from the mere dread of dying, so a thousand facts prove that vigor of character and moral energy may often struggle successfully against disease, and triumph over the most desperate symptoms.

It was thus with the Jesuit. The unshaken firmness of his character, the formidable tenacity of his will (for the will has sometimes a mysterious and almost terrific power), aiding the skilful treatment of Dr. Baleinier, had saved him from the pestilence with which he had been so suddenly attacked. But the shock had been succeeded by a violent fever, which placed Rodin's life in the utmost peril. This increased danger had caused the greatest alarm to Father d'Aigrigny, who felt, in spite of his rivalry and jealousy, that Rodin was the master-spirit of the plot in which they were engaged, and could alone conduct it to a successful issue.

The curtains of the room were half closed, and admitted only a doubtful light to the bed on which Rodin was lying. The Jesuit's features had lost the greenish hue peculiar to

cholera patients, but remained perfectly livid and cadaverous, and so thin, that the dry, rugged skin appeared to cling to the smallest prominence of bone. The muscles and veins of the long, lean, vulture-like neck resembled a bundle of cords. The head, covered with an old, black, filthy night-cap, from beneath which strayed a few thin, gray hairs, rested upon a dirty pillow; for Rodin would not allow them to change his linen. His iron-gray beard had not been shaved for some time, and stood out like the hairs of a brush. Under his shirt he wore an old flannel waistcoat full of holes. He had one of his arms out of bed, and his bony hairy hand, with its bluish nails, held fast a cotton handkerchief of indescribable color.

You might have taken him for a corpse, had it not been for the two brilliant sparks which still burned in the depths of his eyes. In that look, in which seemed concentrated all the remaining life and energy of the man, you might read the most restless anxiety. Sometimes his features revealed the sharpest pangs; sometimes the twisting of his hands, and his sudden starts, proclaimed his despair at being thus fettered to a bed of pain, whilst the serious interests which he had in charge required all the activity of his mind. Thus, with thoughts continually on the stretch, his mind often wandered, and he had fits of delirium, from which he woke as from a painful dream. By the prudent advice of Dr. Baleinier, who considered him not in a state to attend to matters of importance, Father d'Aigrigny had hitherto evaded Rodin's questions with regard to the Rennepont affair, which he dreaded to see lost and ruined in consequence of his forced inaction. The silence of Father d'Aigrigny on this head, and the ignorance in which they kept him, only augmented the sick man's exasperation. Such was the moral and physical state of Rodin, when Cardinal Malipieri entered his chamber against his will.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE LURE.

To understand fully the tortures of Rodin, reduced to inactivity by sickness, and to explain the importance of Cardinal Malipieri's visit, we must remember the audacious views of the ambitious Jesuit, who believed himself following in the steps of Sixtus V., and expected to become his equal.

By the success of the Rennepont affair, to attain to the generalship of his Order, by the corruption of the Sacred College to ascend the pontifical throne, and then, by means of a change in the statutes of the Company, to incorporate the Society of Jesus with the Holy See, instead of leaving it independent, to equal and almost always rule the Papacy—such were the secret projects of Rodin.

Their possibility was sanctioned by numerous precedents, for many mere monks and priests had been suddenly raised to the pontifical dignity. And as for their morality, the accession of the Borgias, of Julius II., and other dubious Vicars of Christ, might excuse and authorize the pretensions of the Jesuit.

Though the object of his secret intrigues at Rome had hitherto been enveloped in the greatest mystery, suspicions had been excited in regard to his private communications with many members of the Sacred College. A portion of that college, Cardinal Malipieri at the head of them, had become very uneasy on the subject, and, profiting by his journey to France, the cardinal had resolved to penetrate the Jesuit's dark designs. If, in the scene we have just painted, the cardinal showed himself so obstinately bent on having a conference with Rodin, in spite of the refusal of the latter, it was because the prelate hoped, as we shall soon see, to get by cunning at the secret, which had hitherto been so well concealed. It was, therefore, in the midst of all these extraordinary circumstances, that Rodin saw himself the victim of a malady, which paralyzed his strength, at the moment when he had need of all his activity, and of all the resources of his mind. After remaining for some seconds motionless near the door, the cardinal, still holding his bottle under his nose, slowly approached the bed where Rodin lay.

The latter, enraged at this perseverance, and wishing to avoid an interview which for many reasons was singularly odious to him, turned his face towards the wall, and pretended to be asleep. Caring little for this feint, and determined to profit by Rodin's state of weakness, the prelate took a chair, and, conquering his repugnance, sat down close to the Jesuit's bed.

"My reverend and very dear father, how do you find yourself?" said he to him, in a honeyed tone, which his Italian accent seemed to render still more hypocritical. Rodin pretended not to hear, breathed hard, and made no answer. But the cardinal, not without disgust, shook with his gloved hand the arm of the Jesuit, and repeated in a louder voice:

"My reverend and very dear father, answer me, I conjure you!"

Rodin could not restrain a movement of angry impatience, but he continued silent. The cardinal was not a man to be discouraged by so little; he again shook the arm of the Jesuit, somewhat more roughly, repeating, with a passionless tenacity that would have incensed the most patient person in the world: "My reverend and very dear father, since you are not asleep, listen to me, I entreat of you."

Irritable with pain, exasperated by the obstinacy of the prelate, Rodin abruptly turned his head, fixed on the Roman his hollow eyes, shining with lurid fire, and, with lips contracted by a sardonic smile, said to him, bitterly: "You must be very anxious, my lord, to see me embalmed, and lie in state with tapers, as you were saying just now, for you thus to come to torment me in my last moments, and hasten my end!"

"Oh, my good father! how can you talk so?" cried the cardinal, raising his hands as if to call heaven to witness to the sincerity of the tender interest he felt for the Jesuit.

"I tell you that I heard all just now, my lord; for the partition is thin," added Rodin, with redoubled bitterness.

"If you mean that, from the bottom of my soul, I desired that you should make an exemplary and Christian end, you are perfectly right, my dear father. I did say so; for, after a life so well employed, it would be sweet to see you an object of adoration for the faithful!"

"I tell you, my lord," cried Rodin, in a weak and broken voice, "that it is ferocious to express such wishes in the presence of a dying man. Yes," he added, with growing animation, that contrasted strongly with his weakness, "take care what you do; for if I am too much plagued and pestered—if I am not allowed to breathe my last breath quietly—I give you notice that you will force me to die in anything but a Christian manner, and if you mean to profit by an edifying spectacle, you will be deceived."

This burst of anger having greatly fatigued Rodin, his head fell back upon the pillow, and he wiped his cracked and bleeding lips with his old cotton handkerchief.

"Come, come, be calm, my very dear father," resumed the cardinal, with a patronizing air; "do not give way to such gloomy ideas. Doubtless, Providence reserves you for great designs, since you have been already delivered from so much peril. Let us hope that you will be likewise saved from your present danger."

Rodin answered by a hoarse growl, and turned his face towards the wall.

The imperturbable prelate continued: "The views of Providence are not confined to your salvation, my very dear father. Its power has been manifested in another way. What I am about to tell you is of the highest importance. Listen attentively."

Without turning his head, Rodin muttered in a tone of angry bitterness, which betrayed his intense sufferings: "They desire my death. My chest is on fire, my head racked with pain, and they have no pity. Oh, I suffer the tortures of the damned!"

"What! *already?*" thought the Roman, with a smile of sarcastic malice; then he said aloud: "Let me persuade you, my very dear father—make an effort to listen to me; you will not regret it."

Still stretched upon the bed, Rodin lifted his hands clasped upon his cotton handkerchief with a gesture of despair, and then let them fall again by his side.

The cardinal slightly shrugged his shoulders, and laid great stress on what follows, so that Rodin might not lose a word of it: "My dear father, it has pleased Providence that, during your fit of raving, you have made, without knowing it, the most important revelations."

The prelate waited with anxious curiosity for the effect of the pious trap he had laid for the Jesuit's weakened faculties. But the latter, still turned towards the wall, did not appear to have heard him and remained silent.

"You are, no doubt, reflecting on my words, my dear father," resumed the cardinal; "you are right, for it concerns a very serious affair. I repeat to you that Providence has allowed you, during your delirium, to betray your most secret thoughts—happily, to me alone. They are such as would compromise you in the highest degree. In short, during your delirium of last night, which lasted nearly two hours, you unveiled the secret objects of your intrigues at Rome with many of the members of the Sacred College."

The cardinal, rising softly, stooped over the bed to watch the expression of Rodin's countenance. But the latter did not give him time. As a galvanized corpse starts into strange and sudden motion, Rodin sprang into a sitting posture at the last words of the prelate.

"He has betrayed himself," said the cardinal, in a low voice, in Italian. Then, resuming his seat, he fixed on the Jesuit his eyes, that sparkled with triumphant joy.

Though he did not hear the exclamation of Malipieri, nor remark the expression of his countenance, Rodin, notwithstanding his state of weakness, instantly felt the imprudence of his start. He pressed his hand to his forehead, as though he had been seized with a giddiness; then, looking wildly round him, he pressed to his trembling lips his old cotton handkerchief, and *gnawed* it mechanically for some seconds.

"Your emotion and alarm confirm the sad discoveries I have made," resumed the cardinal, still more rejoicing at the success of his trick; "and now, my dear father," added he, "you will understand that it is for your best interest to enter into the most minute detail as to your projects and accomplices at Rome. You may then hope, my dear father, for the indulgence of the Holy See—that is, if your avowals are sufficiently explicit to fill up the chasms necessarily left in a confession made during delirium."

Rodin, recovered from his first surprise, perceived, but too late, that he had fallen into a snare, not by any words he had spoken, but by his too significant movements. In fact, the Jesuit had feared for a moment that he might have betrayed himself during his delirium, when he heard himself accused of dark intrigues with Rome; but, after some minutes of reflection, his common sense suggested: "If this crafty Roman knew my secret, he would take care not to tell me so. He has only suspicions, confirmed by my involuntary start just now."

Rodin wiped the cold sweat from his burning forehead. The emotion of this scene augmented his sufferings, and aggravated the danger of his condition. Worn out with fatigue, he could not remain long in a sitting posture, and soon fell back upon the bed.

"*Per Bacco!*" said the cardinal to himself, alarmed at the expression of the Jesuit's face; "if he were to die before he has spoken, and so escape the snare!"

Then, leaning over the bed, the prelate asked: "What is the matter, my very dear father?"

"I am weak, my lord—I am in pain—I cannot express what I suffer."

"Let us hope, my very dear father, that this crisis will have no fatal results; but the contrary may happen, and it behooves the salvation of your soul to make instantly the fullest confession. Were it even to exhaust your strength, what is this perishable body compared to eternal life?"

"Of what confession do you speak, my lord?" said Rodin, in a feeble and yet sarcastic tone.

"What confession!" cried the amazed cardinal; "why, with regard to your dangerous intrigues at Rome."

"What intrigues?" asked Rodin.

"The intrigues you revealed during your delirium," replied the prelate, with still more angry impatience. "Were not your avowals sufficiently explicit? Why, then, this culpable hesitation to complete them?"

"My avowals—were explicit—you assure me?" said Rodin, pausing after each word for want of breath, but without losing his energy and presence of mind.

"Yes, I repeat it," resumed the cardinal; "with the exception of a few chasms, they were most explicit."

"Then why repeat them?" said Rodin, with the same sardonic smile on his violet lips.

"Why repeat them?" cried the angry prelate. "In order to gain pardon; for if there is indulgence and mercy for the repentant sinner, there must be condemnation and curses for the hardened criminal!"

"Oh, what torture! I am dying by slow fire!" murmured Rodin. "Since I have told all," he resumed, "I have nothing more to tell. You know it already."

"I know all—doubtless, I know all," replied the prelate, in a voice of thunder; "but how have I learned it? By confessions made in a state of unconsciousness. Do you think they will avail you anything? No; the moment is solemn—death is at hand, tremble to die with a sacrilegious falsehood on your lips," cried the prelate, shaking Rodin violently by the arm; "dread the eternal flames, if you dare deny what you know to be the truth. Do you deny it?"

"I deny nothing," murmured Rodin, with difficulty. "Only leave me alone!"

"Then heaven inspires you," said the cardinal, with a sigh of satisfaction; and, thinking he had nearly attained his object, he resumed, "Listen to the divine word, that will guide you, father. You deny nothing?"

"I was—delirious—and cannot—(oh! how I suffer!)" added Rodin, by way of parenthesis; "and cannot therefore—deny—the nonsense—I may have uttered!"

"But when this nonsense agrees with the truth," cried the prelate, furious at being again deceived in his expectation; "but when raving is an involuntary, providential revelation——"

"Cardinal Malipieri—your craft is no match—for my

agony," answered Rodin, in a failing voice. "The proof—that I have not told my secret—if I have a secret—is—that you want to make me tell it!" In spite of his pain and weakness, the Jesuit had courage to raise himself in the bed, and look the cardinal full in the face, with a smile of bitter irony. After which he fell back on the pillow, and pressed his hands to his chest, with a long sigh of anguish.

"Damnation! the infernal Jesuit has found me out!" said the cardinal to himself, as he stamped his foot with rage. "He sees that he was compromised by his first movement; he is now upon his guard; I shall get nothing more from him—unless indeed, profiting by the state of weakness in which he is, I can, by entreaties, by threats, by terror——"

The prelate was unable to finish. The door opened abruptly, and Father d'Aigrigny entered the room, exclaiming with an explosion of joy: "Excellent news!"

CHAPTER XXVIII.

GOOD NEWS.

By the alteration in the countenance of Father d'Aigrigny, his pale cheek, and the feebleness of his walk, one might see that the terrible scene in the square of Nôtre-Dame, had violently reacted upon his health. Yet his face was radiant and triumphant, as he entered Rodin's chamber, exclaiming: "Excellent news!"

On these words, Rodin started. In spite of his weakness, he raised his head, and his eyes shone with a curious, uneasy, piercing expression. With his lean hand, he beckoned Father d'Aigrigny to approach the bed, and said to him, in a broken voice, so weak that it was scarcely audible: "I am very ill—the cardinal has nearly finished me—but if this excellent news—relates to the Rennepont affair—of which I hear nothing—it might save me yet!"

"Be saved then!" cried Father d'Aigrigny, forgetting the recommendations of Dr. Baleinier; "read, rejoice! What you foretold is beginning to be realized!"

So saying, he drew a paper from his pocket, and delivered it to Rodin, who seized it with an eager and trembling hand. Some minutes before, Rodin would have been really incapable of continuing his conversation with the cardinal, even if prudence had allowed him to do so; nor could he have

read a single line, so dim had his sight become. But, at the words of Father d'Aigrigny, he felt such a renewal of hope and vigor, that, by a mighty effort of energy and will, he rose to a sitting posture, and, with clear head, and look of intelligent animation, he read rapidly the paper that Father d'Aigrigny had just delivered to him.

The cardinal, amazed at this sudden transfiguration, asked himself if he beheld the same man, who, a few minutes before, had fallen back on his bed, almost insensible. Hardly had Rodin finished reading, than he uttered a cry of stifled joy, saying, with an accent impossible to describe: "One gone! it works—'tis well!" And, closing his eyes in a kind of ecstatic transport, a smile of proud triumph overspread his face, and rendered him still more hideous, by discovering his yellow and gumless teeth. His emotion was so violent, that the paper fell from his trembling hand.

"He has fainted," cried Father d'Aigrigny, with uneasiness, as he leaned over Rodin. "It is my fault, I forgot that the doctor cautioned me not to talk to him of serious matters."

"No; do not reproach yourself," said Rodin, in a low voice, half-raising himself in the bed. "This unexpected joy may perhaps cure me. Yes—I scarce know what I feel—but look at my cheeks—it seems to me, that, for the first time since I have been stretched on this bed of pain, they are a little warm."

Rodin spoke the truth. A slight color appeared suddenly on his livid and icy cheeks; his voice though still very weak, became less tremulous, and he exclaimed, in a tone of conviction that startled Father d'Aigrigny and the prelate, "This first success answers for the others. I read the future. Yes yes; our cause will triumph. Every member of the execrable Rennepont family will be crushed—and that soon you will see——"

Then, pausing, Rodin threw himself back on the pillow, exclaiming: "Oh! I am choked with joy. My voice fails me."

"But what is it?" asked the cardinal of Father d'Aigrigny.

The latter replied, in a tone of hypocritical sanctity: "One of the heirs of the Rennepont family, a poor fellow, worn out with excesses and debauchery, died three days ago, at the close of some abominable orgies, in which he had braved the cholera with sacrilegious impiety. In consequence of the indisposition that kept me at home, and of another circumstance, I only received to-day the certificate of the

death of this victim of intemperance and irreligion. I must proclaim it to the praise of his reverence"—pointing to Rodin—"that he told me, the worst enemies of the descendants of that infamous renegade would be their own bad passions, and that we might look to them as our allies against the whole impious race. And so it has happened with Jacques Rennepont."

"You see," said Rodin, in so faint a voice that it was almost unintelligible, "the punishment begins already. One of the Renneponts is dead—and believe me—this certificate," and he pointed to the paper that Father d'Aigrigny held in his hand, "will one day be worth forty millions to the Society of Jesus—and that—because——"

The lips alone finished the sentence. During some seconds, Rodin's voice had become so faint, that it was at last quite imperceptible. His larynx, contracted by violent emotion, no longer emitted any sound. The Jesuit, far from being disconcerted by this incident, finished his phrase, as it were, by expressive pantomime. Raising his head proudly he tapped his forehead with his forefinger, as if to express that it was to his ability this first success was owing. But he soon fell back again on the bed, exhausted, breathless, sinking, with his cotton handkerchief pressed once more to his parched lips. The good news, as Father d'Aigrigny called it, had not cured Rodin. For a moment only, he had had the courage to forget his pain. But the slight color on his cheek soon disappeared; his face became once more livid. His sufferings, suspended for a moment, were so much increased in violence, that he writhed beneath the coverlet, and buried his face in the pillow, extending his arms above his head, and holding them stiff as bars of iron. After this crisis, intense as it was rapid, during which Father d'Aigrigny and the prelate bent anxiously over him, Rodin, whose face was bathed in cold sweat, made a sign that he suffered less, and that he wished to drink of a potion to which he pointed. Father d'Aigrigny fetched it for him, and while the cardinal held him up with marked disgust, the abbé administered a few spoonfuls of the potion, which almost immediately produced a soothing effect.

"Shall I call M. Rousselet?" said Father d'Aigrigny, when Rodin was once more laid down in bed.

Rodin shook his head; then, with a fresh effort, he raised his right hand, opened it, and pointed with his forefinger to a desk in a corner of the room, to signify that, being no longer able to speak, he wished to write.

"I understand your reverence," said Father d'Aigrigny; "but first calm yourself. Presently, if you require it, I will give you writing-materials."

Two knocks at the outer door of the next room interrupted this scene. From motives of prudence, Father d'Aigrigny had begged Rousselet to remain in the first of the three rooms. He now went to open the door, and Rousselet handed him a voluminous packet, saying: "I beg pardon for disturbing you, father, but I was told to let you have these papers instantly."

"Thank you, M. Rousselet," said Father d'Aigrigny; "do you know at what hour Dr. Baleinier will return?"

"He will not be long, father, for he wishes to perform before night the painful operation, that will have a decisive effect on the condition of Father Rodin. I am preparing what is necessary for it," added Rousselet, as he pointed to a singular and formidable apparatus, which Father d'Aigrigny examined with a kind of terror.

"I do not know if the symptom is a serious one," said the Jesuit; "but the reverend father has suddenly lost his voice."

"It is the third time this has happened within the last week," said Rousselet; "the operation of Dr. Baleinier will act both on the larynx and on the lungs."

"Is the operation a very painful one?" asked Father d'Aigrigny.

"There is, perhaps, none more cruel in surgery," answered the young doctor; "and Dr. Baleinier has partly concealed its nature from Father Rodin."

"Please to wait here for Dr. Baleinier, and send him to us as soon as he arrives," resumed Father d'Aigrigny: and, returning to the sick chamber, he sat down by the bedside, and said to Rodin, as he showed him the letter: "Here are different reports with regard to different members of the Rennepont family, whom I have had looked after by others, my indisposition having kept me at home for the last few days. I do not know, father, if the state of your health will permit you to hear——"

Rodin made a gesture, at once so supplicating and peremptory, that Father d'Aigrigny felt there would be at least as much danger in refusing as in granting his request; so, turning towards the cardinal, still inconsolable at not having discovered the Jesuit's secret, he said to him with respectful deference, pointing at the same time to the letter: "Have I the permission of your Eminence?"

The prelate bowed, and replied: "Your affairs are ours, my dear father. The Church must always rejoice in what rejoices your glorious Company."

Father d'Aigrigny unsealed the packet, and found in it different notes in different handwritings. When he had read the first, his countenance darkened, and he said, in a grave tone: "A misfortune—a great misfortune."

Rodin turned his head abruptly, and looked at him with an air of uneasy questioning.

"Florine is dead of the cholera," answered Father d'Aigrigny; "and what is the worst," added he, crumpling the note between his hands, "before dying, the miserable creature confessed to Mdlle. de Cardoville that she long acted as a spy under the orders of your reverence."

No doubt the death of Florine, and the confession she had made, crossed some of the plans of Rodin, for he uttered an inarticulate murmur, and his countenance expressed great vexation.

Passing to another note, Father d'Aigrigny continued: "This relates to Marshal Simon, and is not absolutely bad, but still far from satisfactory, as it announces some amelioration in his position. We shall see if it merits belief, by information from another source."

Rodin made a sign of impatience, to hasten Father d'Aigrigny to read the note, which he did as follows: "'For some days, the mind of the marshal has appeared to be less sorrowful, anxious and agitated. He lately passed two hours with his daughters, which had not been the case for some time before. The harsh countenance of the soldier Dagobert is becoming smoother—a sure sign of some amelioration in the condition of the marshal. Detected by their handwriting, the last anonymous letters were returned by Dagobert to the postman, without having been opened by the marshal. Some other method must be found to get them delivered.'"

Looking at Rodin, Father d'Aigrigny said to him: "Your reverence thinks with me that this note is not very satisfactory?"

Rodin held down his head. One saw by the expression of his countenance how much he suffered by not being able to speak. Twice he put his hand to his throat, and looked at Father d'Aigrigny with anguish.

"Oh!" cried Father d'Aigrigny, angrily, when he had perused another note, "for one lucky chance, to-day brings some very black ones."

At these words, turning hastily to Father d'Aigrigny, and extending his trembling hands, Rodin questioned him with look and gesture. The cardinal, sharing his uneasiness, exclaimed: "What do you learn by this note, my dear father?"

"We thought the residence of M. Hardy in our house completely unknown," replied Father d'Aigrigny, "but we now fear that Agricola Baudoin has discovered the retreat of his old master, and that he has even communicated with him by letter, through a servant of the house. So," added the reverend father, angrily, "during the three days that I have not been able to visit the pavilion, one of my servants must have been bought over. There is one of them, a man blind of one eye, whom I have always suspected—the wretch! But no: I will not yet believe this treachery. The consequences would be too deplorable; for I know how matters stand, and that such a correspondence might ruin everything. By awaking in M. Hardy memories with difficulty laid asleep, they might destroy in a single day all that has been done since he inhabits our house. Luckily, this note contains only doubts and fears; my other information will be more positive, and will not, I hope, confirm them."

"My dear father," said the cardinal, "do not despair. The Lord will not abandon the good cause!"

Father d'Aigrigny seemed very little consoled by this assurance. He remained still and thoughtful, whilst Rodin writhed his head in a paroxysm of mute rage, as he reflected on this new check.

"Let us turn to the last note," said Father d'Aigrigny, after a moment of thoughtful silence. "I have so much confidence in the person who sends it, that I cannot doubt the correctness of the information it contains. May it contradict the others!"

In order not to break the chain of facts contained in this last note, which was to have so startling an effect on the actors in this scene, we shall leave it to the reader's imagination to supply the exclamations of surprise, hate, rage and fear of Father d'Aigrigny, and the terrific pantomime of Rodin, during the perusal of this formidable document, the result of the observations of a faithful and secret agent of the reverend fathers. Comparing this note with the other information received, the results appeared more distressing to the reverend fathers. Thus Gabriel had long and frequent conferences with Adrienne, who before was unknown to him. Agricola Baudoin had opened a communication

with Francis Hardy, and the officers of justice were on the track of the authors and instigators of the riot which had led to the burning of the factory of Baron Tripeaud's rival. It seemed almost certain that Mdlle. de Cardoville had had an interview with Prince Djalma.

This combination of facts showed that, faithful to the threats she had uttered to Rodin, when she had unmasked the double perfidy of the reverend father, Mdlle. de Cardoville was actively engaged in uniting the scattered members of her family, to form a league against those dangerous enemies, whose detestable projects, once unveiled and boldly encountered, could hardly have a chance of success. The reader will now understand the tremendous effect of this note on Father d'Aigrigny and Rodin—on Rodin, stretched powerless on a bed of pain at the moment when the scaffolding, raised with so much labor, seemed to be tumbling around him.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE OPERATION.

We have given up the attempt to paint the countenance, attitude, and gesticulation of Rodin during the reading of this note, which seemed to ruin all his most cherished hopes. Everything was failing at once, at the moment when only superhuman trust in the success of his plans could give him sufficient energy to strive against mortal sickness. A single, absorbing thought had agitated him even to delirium: What progress, during his illness, had been made in this immense affair? He had first heard a good piece of news, the death of Jacques Rennepont; but now the advantages of this decease, which reduced the number of the heirs from seven to six, were entirely lost. To what purpose would be this death, if the other members of the family, dispersed and persecuted with such infernal perseverance, were to unite and discover the enemies who had so long aimed at them in darkness? If all those wounded hearts were to console, enlighten, support each other, their cause would be gained, and the inheritance rescued from the reverend fathers. What was to be done?

Strange power of the human will!—Rodin had one foot in the grave; he was almost at the last gasp; his voice had failed him. And yet that obstinate nature, so full of energy and resources, did not despair. Let but a miracle restore

his health, and that firm confidence in the success of his projects which has given him power to struggle against disease, tells him that he could yet save all—but then he must have health and life! Health! life! His physician does not know if he will survive the shock—if he can bear the pain—of a terrible operation. Health! life! and just now Rodin heard talk of the solemn funeral they had prepared for him. And yet—health, life, he will have them. Yes; he has willed to live—and he has lived—why should he not live longer? He will live—because he has willed it!

All that we have just written passed though Rodin's mind in a second. His features, convulsed by the mental torment he endured, must have assumed a very strange expression, for Father d'Aigrigny and the cardinal looked at him in silent consternation. Once resolved to live, and to sustain a desperate struggle with the Rennepont family, Rodin acted in consequence. For a few moments Father d'Aigrigny and the prelate believed themselves under the influence of a dream. By an effort of unparalleled energy, and as if moved by hidden mechanism, Rodin sprang from the bed, dragging the sheet with him, and trailing it, like a shroud, behind his livid and fleshless body. The room was cold; the face of the Jesuit was bathed in sweat; his naked and bony feet left their moist print upon the stones.

"What are you doing? It is death!" cried Father d'Aigrigny, rushing towards Rodin, to force him to lie down again.

But the latter, extending one of his skeleton arms, as hard as iron, pushed aside Father d'Aigrigny with inconceivable vigor, considering the state of exhaustion in which he had so long been.

"He has the strength of a man in a fit of epilepsy," said Father d'Aigrigny, recovering his balance.

With a steady step Rodin advanced to the desk on which Dr. Baleinier daily wrote his prescriptions. Seating himself before it, the Jesuit took pen and paper, and began to write in a firm hand. His calm, slow, and sure movements had in them something of the deliberateness remarked in somnambulists. Mute and motionless, hardly knowing whether they dreamed or not, the cardinal and Father d'Aigrigny remained staring at the incredible coolness of Rodin, who, half-naked, continued to write with perfect tranquillity.

"But, father," said the Abbé d'Aigrigny, advancing towards him, "this is madness!"

Rodin shrugged his shoulders, stopped him with a gesture, and made him a sign to read what he had just written.

The reverend father expected to see the ravings of a diseased brain; but he took the note, whilst Rodin commenced another.

"My lord," exclaimed Father d'Aigrigny, "read this!"

The cardinal read the paper, and returning it to the reverend father with equal amazement, added: "It is full of reason, ability, and resources. We shall thus be able to neutralize the dangerous combination of Abbé Gabriel and Mdlle. de Cardoville, who appear to be the most formidable leaders of the coalition."

"It is really miraculous," said Father d'Aigrigny.

"Oh, my dear father!" whispered the cardinal, shaking his head; "what a pity that we are the only witnesses of this scene! What an excellent MIRACLE we could have made of it! In one sense, it is another Raising of Lazarus!"

"What an idea, my lord!" answered Father d'Aigrigny, in a low voice. "It is perfect—and we must not give it up——"

This innocent little plot was interrupted by Rodin, who, turning his head, made a sign to Father d'Aigrigny to approach, and delivered to him another sheet, with this note attached: "To be executed within an hour."

Having rapidly perused the paper, Father d'Aigrigny exclaimed: "Right! I had not thought of that. Instead of being fatal, the correspondence between Agricola and M. Hardy may thus have the best results. Really," added the reverend father in a low voice to the prelate, while Rodin continued to write, "I am quite confounded. I read—I see—and yet I can hardly believe my eyes. Just before, exhausted and dying—and now with his mind as clear and penetrating as ever. Can this be one of the phenomena of somnambulism, in which the mind alone governs and sustains the body?"

Suddenly the door opened, and Dr. Baleinier entered the room. At sight of Rodin, seated half-naked at the desk, with his feet upon the cold stones, the doctor exclaimed, in a tone of reproach and alarm: "But, my lord—but, father—it is murder to let the unhappy man do this!—If he is delirious from fever, he must have the strait-waistcoat, and be tied down in bed."

So saying, Dr. Baleinier hastily approached Rodin, and took him by the arm. Instead of finding the skin dry and chilly, as he expected, he found it flexible, almost damp.

Struck with surprise, the doctor sought to feel the pulse of the left hand, which Rodin resigned to him, whilst he continued working with the right.

"What a prodigy!" cried the doctor, as he counted Rodin's pulse; "for a week past, and even this morning, the pulse has been abrupt, intermittent, almost insensible, and now it is firm, regular—I am really puzzled—what then has happened? I can hardly believe what I see," added the doctor, turning towards Father d'Aigrigny and the cardinal.

"The reverend father, who had first lost his voice, was next seized with such furious and violent despair caused by the receipt of bad news," answered Father d'Aigrigny, "that we feared a moment for his life; while now, on the contrary, the reverend father has gained sufficient strength to go to his desk, and write for some minutes, with a clearness of argument and expression, which has confounded both the cardinal and myself."

"There is no longer any doubt of it," cried the doctor. "The violent despair has caused a degree of emotion, which will admirably prepare the reactive crisis, that I am now almost certain of producing by the operation."

"You persist in the operation?" whispered Father d'Aigrigny, whilst Rodin continued to write.

"I might have hesitated this morning; but, disposed as he now is for it, I must profit by the moment of excitement, which will be followed by greater depression."

"Then, without the operation——" said the cardinal.

"This fortunate and unexpected crisis will soon be over, and the reaction may kill him, my lord."

"Have you informed him of the serious nature of the operation?"

"Pretty nearly, my lord."

"But it is time to bring him to the point."

"That is what I will do, my lord," said Dr. Baleinier; and approaching Rodin, who continued to write, he thus addressed him, in a firm voice: "My reverend father, do you wish to be up and well in a week?"

Rodin nodded, full of confidence, as much as to say: "I am up already."

"Do not deceive yourself," replied the doctor. "This crisis is excellent, but it will not last, and if we would profit by it, we must proceed with the operation of which I have spoken to you—or, I tell you plainly, I answer for nothing after such a shock."

Rodin was the more struck with these words, as, half an

hour ago, he had experienced the short duration of the improvement occasioned by Father d'Aigrigny's good news, and as already he felt increased oppression on the chest.

Dr. Baleinier, wishing to decide him, added: "In a word, father, will you live or die?"

Rodin wrote rapidly this answer, which he gave to the doctor: "To live, I would let you cut me limb from limb. I am ready for anything." And he made a movement to rise.

"I must tell you, reverend father, so as not to take you by surprise," added Dr. Baleinier, "that this operation is cruelly painful."

Rodin shrugged his shoulders and wrote with a firm hand: "Leave me my head; you may take all the rest."

The doctor read these words aloud, and the cardinal and Father d'Aigrigny looked at each other in admiration of this dauntless courage.

"Reverend father," said Dr. Baleinier, "you must lie down."

Rodin wrote: "Get everything ready. I have still some orders to write. Let me know when it is time."

Then folding up a paper, which he had sealed with a wafer, Rodin gave these words to Father d'Aigrigny: "Send this note instantly to the agent who addressed the anonymous letters to Marshal Simon."

"Instantly, reverend father," replied the abbé; "I will employ a sure messenger."

"Reverend father," said Baleinier to Rodin, "since you *must* write, lie down in bed, and write there, during our little preparations."

Rodin made an affirmative gesture, and rose. But already the prognostics of the doctor were realized. The Jesuit could hardly remain standing for a second; he fell back into a chair, and looked at Dr. Baleinier with anguish, whilst his breathing became more and more difficult.

The doctor said to him: "Do not be uneasy. But we must make haste. Lean upon me and Father d'Aigrigny."

Aided by these two supporters, Rodin was able to regain the bed. Once there, he made signs that they should bring him pen, ink, and paper. Then he continued to write upon his knees, pausing from time to time, to breathe with great difficulty.

"Reverend father," said Baleinier to d'Aigrigny, "are you capable of acting as one of my assistants in the operation? Have you that sort of courage?"

"No," said the reverend father; "in the army I could

never assist at an amputation. The sight of blood is too much for me."

"There will be no blood," said the doctor, "but it will be worse. Please send me three of our reverend fathers to assist me, and ask M. Rousselet to bring in the apparatus."

Father d'Aigrigny went out. The prelate approached the doctor, and whispered, pointing to Rodin: "Is he out of danger?"

"If he stands the operation—yes, my lord."

"Are you sure that he can stand it?"

"To him I should say 'yes,' to you 'I hope so.'"

"And were he to die, would there be time to administer the sacraments in public, with a certain pomp, which always causes some little delay?"

"His dying may continue, my lord—a quarter of an hour."

"It is short, but we must be satisfied with that," said the prelate.

And, going to one of the windows, he began to tap with his fingers on the glass, while he thought of the illumination effects, in the event of Rodin's lying in state. At this moment, Rousselet entered, with a large square box under his arm. He placed it on the drawers, and began to arrange his apparatus.

"How many have you prepared?" said the doctor.

"Six, sir."

"Four will do, but it is well to be fully provided. The cotton is not too thick?"

"Look, sir."

"Very good."

"And how is the reverend father?" asked the pupil.

"Humph!" answered the doctor, in a whisper. "The chest is terribly clogged, the respiration hissing, the voice gone—still there is a change."

"All my fear is, sir, that the reverend father will not be able to stand the dreadful pain."

"It is another chance; but, under the circumstances, we must risk all. Come, my dear boy, light the taper; I hear our assistants."

Just then Father d'Aigrigny entered the room, accompanied by the three Jesuits, who, in the morning, had walked in the garden. The two old men, with their rosy cheeks, and the young one, with the ascetic countenance, all three dressed in black, with their square caps and white bands, appeared perfectly ready to assist Dr. Baleinier in his formidable operation.

CHAPTER XXX.

THE TORTURE.

"Reverend fathers," said Dr. Baleinier, graciously, to the three, "I thank you for your kind aid. What you have to do is very simple, and, by the blessing of heaven, this operation will save the life of our dear Father Rodin."

The three black-gowns cast up their eyes piously, and then bowed altogether, like one man. Rodin, indifferent to what was passing around him, never ceased an instant to write or reflect. Nevertheless, in spite of his apparent calmness, he felt such difficulty in breathing, that more than once Dr. Baleinier had turned round uneasily, as he heard the stifled rattling in the throat of the sick man. Making a sign to his pupil, the doctor approached Rodin and said to him: "Come, reverend father; this is the important moment. Courage!"

No sign of alarm was expressed in the Jesuit's countenance. His features remained impassible as those of a corpse. Only, his little reptile eyes sparkled still more brightly in their dark cavities. For a moment, he looked round at the spectators of this scene; then, taking his pen between his teeth, he folded and wafered another letter, placed it on the table beside the bed, and nodded to Dr. Baleinier, as if to say: "I am ready."

"You must take off your flannel waistcoat, and your shirt, father." Rodin hesitated an instant, and the doctor resumed: "It is absolutely necessary, father."

Aided by Baleinier, Rodin obeyed, whilst the doctor added, no doubt to spare his modesty: "We shall only require the chest, right and left, my dear father."

And now Rodin, stretched upon his back, with his dirty night-cap still on his head, exposed the upper part of a livid trunk, or rather, the bony cage of a skeleton, for the shadows of the ribs and cartilages encircled the skin with deep, black lines. As for the arms, they resembled bones twisted with cord and covered with tanned parchment.

"Come, M. Rousselet, the apparatus!" said Baleinier.

Then addressing the three Jesuits, he added: "Please

draw near, gentlemen; what you have to do is very simple, as you will see."

It was indeed very simple. The doctor gave to each of his four assistants a sort of little steel tripod about two inches in diameter and three in height; the circular centre of this tripod was filled with cotton; the instrument was held in the left hand by means of a wooden handle. In the right hand each assistant held a small tin tube about eighteen inches long; at one end was a mouthpiece to receive the lips of the operator, and the other spread out so as to form a cover to the little tripod. These preparations had nothing alarming in them. Father d'Aigrigny and the prelate, who looked on from a little distance, could not understand how this operation should be so painful. They soon understood it.

Dr. Baleinier, having thus provided his four assistants, made them approach Rodin, whose bed had been rolled into the middle of the room. Two of them were placed on one side, two on the other.

"Now, gentlemen," said Dr. Baleinier, "set light to the cotton; place the lighted part on the skin of his reverence, by means of the tripod which contains the wick; cover the tripod with the broad part of the tube, and then blow through the other end to keep up the fire. It is very simple, as you see."

It was, in fact, full of the most patriarchal and primitive ingenuity. Four lighted cotton wicks, so disposed as to burn very slowly, were applied to the two sides of Rodin's chest. This is vulgarly called the *moxa*. The trick is done, when the whole thickness of the skin has been burnt slowly through. It lasts seven or eight minutes. They say that an amputation is nothing to it. Rodin had watched the preparations with intrepid curiosity. But, at the first touch of the four fires, he writhed like a serpent, without being able to utter a cry. Even the expression of pain was denied him. The four assistants being disturbed by the sudden start of Rodin, it was necessary to begin again.

"Courage, my dear father! offer these sufferings to the Lord!" said Dr. Baleinier, in a sanctified tone. "I told you the operation would be very painful; but then it is salutary in proportion. Come; you that have shown such decisive resolution, do not fail at the last moment!"

Rodin had closed his eyes, conquered by the first agony of pain. He now opened them, and looked at the doctor as if ashamed of such weakness. And yet on the sides of his

chest were four large, bleeding wounds—so violent had been the first singe. As he again extended himself on the bed of torture, Rodin made a sign that he wished to write. The doctor gave him the pen, and he wrote as follows, by way of memorandum: "It is better not to lose any time. Inform Baron Tripeaud of the warrant issued against Leonard, so that he may be on his guard."

Having written this note, the Jesuit gave it to Dr. Baleinier, to hand it to Father d'Aigrigny, who was as much amazed as the doctor and the cardinal, at such extraordinary presence of mind in the midst of such horrible pain. Rodin, with his eyes fixed on the reverend father, seemed to wait with impatience for him to leave the room to execute his orders. Guessing the thought of Rodin, the doctor whispered Father d'Aigrigny, who went out.

"Come, reverend father," said the doctor, "we must begin again. This time do not move."

Rodin did not answer, but clasped his hands over his head, closed his eyes, and presented his chest. It was a strange, lugubrious, almost fantastic spectacle. The three priests, in their long black gowns, leaned over this body, which almost resembled a corpse, and blowing through their tubes into the chest of the patient, seemed as if pumping up his blood by some magic charm. A sickening odor of burnt flesh began to spread through the silent chamber, and each assistant heard a slight crackling beneath the smoking trivet; it was the skin of Rodin giving way to the action of fire, and splitting open in four different parts of his chest. The sweat poured from his livid face, which it made to shine; a few locks of his gray hair stood up stiff and moist from his temples. Sometimes the spasms were so violent, that the veins swelled on his stiffened arms, and were stretched like cords ready to break.

Enduring this frightful torture with as much intrepid resignation as the savage whose glory consists in despising pain, Rodin gathered his strength and courage from the hope—we had almost said the certainty—of life. Such was the make of this dauntless character, such the energy of this powerful mind, that, in the midst of indescribable torments, his one fixed idea never left him. During the rare intervals of suffering—for pain is equal even at this degree of intensity—Rodin still thought of the Rennepont inheritance, and calculated his chances, and combined his measures, feeling that he had not a minute to lose. Dr. Baleinier watched him with extreme attention, waiting for the

effects of the reaction of pain upon the patient, who seemed already to breathe with less difficulty.

Suddenly Rodin placed his hand on his forehead, as if struck with some new idea, and turning his head towards Dr. Baleinier, made a sign to him to suspend the operation.

"I must tell you, reverend father," answered the doctor, "that it is not half finished, and, if we leave off, the renewal will be more painful——"

Rodin made a sign that he did not care, and that he wanted to write.

"Gentlemen, stop a moment," said Dr. Baleinier; "keep down your moxas, but do not blow the fire."

So the fire was to burn slowly, instead of fiercely, but still upon the skin of the patient. In spite of this pain, less intense, but still sharp and keen, Rodin, stretched upon his back, began to write, holding the paper above his head. On the first sheet he traced some alphabetic signs, part of a cipher known to himself alone. In the midst of the torture, a luminous idea had crossed his mind; fearful of forgetting it amidst his sufferings, he now took note of it. On another paper he wrote the following, which was instantly delivered to Father d'Aigrigny: "Send B. immediately to Faringhea, for the report of the last few days with regard to Djalma, and let B. bring it hither on the instant." Father d'Aigrigny went out to execute this new order. The cardinal approached a little nearer to the scene of the operation, for, in spite of the bad odor of the room, he took delight in seeing the Jesuit half roasted, having long cherished against him the rancor of an Italian and a priest.

"Come, reverend father," said the doctor to Rodin, "continue to be admirably courageous, and your chest will free itself. You have still a bitter moment to go through—and then I have good hope."

The patient resumed his former position. The moment Father d'Aigrigny returned, Rodin questioned him with a look, to which the reverend father replied by a nod. At a sign from the doctor, the four assistants began to blow through the tubes with all their might. This increase of torture was so horrible, that, in spite of his self-control, Rodin gnashed his teeth, started convulsively, and so expanded his palpitating chest, that, after a violent spasm, there rose from his throat and lungs a scream of terrific pain—but it was free, loud, sonorous.

"The chest is free!" cried the doctor, in triumph. "The lungs have play—the voice returns—he is saved! —Blow,

gentlemen, blow; and, reverend father, cry out as much as you please: I shall be delighted to hear you, for it will give you relief. Courage! I answer for the result. It is a wonderful cure. I will publish it by sound of trumpet."

"Allow me, doctor," whispered Father d'Aigrigny, as he approached Dr. Baleinier; "the cardinal can witness, that I claimed beforehand the publication of this affair—as a miraculous fact."

"Let it be miraculous then," answered Dr. Baleinier, disappointed—for he set some value on his own work.

On hearing he was saved, Rodin, though his sufferings were perhaps worse than ever, for the fire had now pierced the scarf-skin, assumed almost an infernal beauty. Through the painful contraction of his features shone the pride of savage triumph; the monster felt that he was becoming once more strong and powerful, and he seemed conscious the evils that his fatal resurrection was to cause. And so, of still writhing beneath the flames, he pronounced these words, the first that struggled from his chest: "I told you I should live!"

"You told us true," cried the doctor, feeling his pulse; "the circulation is now full and regular, the lungs are free. The reaction is complete. You are saved."

At this moment, the last shreds of cotton had burnt out. The trivets were withdrawn, and on the skeleton trunk of Rodin were seen four large round blisters. The skin still smoked, and the raw flesh was visible beneath. In one of his sudden movements, a lamp had been misplaced, and one of these burns was larger than the other, presenting as it were to the eye a double circle. Rodin looked down upon his wounds. After some seconds of silent contemplation, a strange smile curled his lips. Without changing his position, he glanced at Father d'Aigrigny with an expression impossible to describe, and said to him, as he slowly counted the wounds, touching them with his flat and dirty nail: "Father d'Aigrigny, what an omen!—Look here! one Rennepont—two Renneponts—three Renneponts—four Renneponts—where is then the fifth!—Ah! here—this wound will count for two. They are twins." * And he emitted a little dry, bitter laugh. Father d'Aigrigny, the cardinal, and Dr. Baleinier, alone understood the sense of these mysterious and fatal words, which Rodin soon completed by a terrible

* Jacques Rennepont being dead, and Gabriel out of the field, in consequence of his donation, there remained only five persons of the family —Rose and Blanche, Djalma, Adrienne, and Hardy.

allusion, as he exclaimed, with prophetic voice, and almost inspired air: "Yes, I say it. The impious race will be reduced to ashes, like the fragments of this poor flesh. I say it, and it will be so. I said I would live—and I do live!"

CHAPTER XXXI.

VICE AND VIRTUE.

Two days have elapsed since Rodin was miraculously restored to life. The reader will not have forgotten the house in the Rue Clovis, where the reverend father had an apartment, and where also was the lodging of Philemon, inhabited by Rose-Pompon. It is about three o'clock in the afternoon. A bright ray of light, penetrating through a round hole in the door of Mother Arsène's subterraneous shop, forms a striking contrast with the darkness of this cavern. The ray streams full upon a melancholy object. In the midst of fagots and faded vegetables, and close to a great heap of charcoal, stands a wretched bed; beneath the sheet, which covers it, can be traced the stiff and angular proportions of a corpse. It is the body of Mother Arsène herself, who died two days before, of the cholera. The burials have been so numerous, that there has been no time to remove her remains. The Rue Clovis is almost deserted. A mournful silence reigns without, often broken by the sharp whistling of the north wind. Between the squalls, one hears a sort of pattering. It is the noise of the large rats, running to and fro across the heap of charcoal.

Suddenly, another sound is heard, and these unclean animals fly to hide themselves in their holes. Some one is trying to force open the door, which communicates between the shop and the passage. It offers but little resistance, and, in a few seconds, the worn-out lock gives way, and a woman enters. For a short time she stands motionless in the obscurity of the damp and icy cave. After a minute's hesitation, the woman advances, and the ray of light illumines the features of the Bacchanal Queen. Slowly, she approached the funeral couch. Since the death of Jacques, the alteration in the countenance of Cephyse had gone on increasing. Fearfully pale, with her fine black hair in disorder, her legs and feet naked, she was barely covered with an old patched petticoat and a very ragged handkerchief.

When she came near the bed, she cast a glance of almost

savage assurance at the shroud. Suddenly she drew back, with a low cry of involuntary terror. The sheet moved with a rapid undulation, extending from the feet to the head of the corpse. But soon the sight of a rat, flying along the side of the worm-eaten bedstead, explained the movement of the shroud. Recovering from her fright, Cephyse began to look for several things, and collected them in haste, as though she dreaded being surprised in the miserable shop. First, she seized a basket, and filled it with charcoal; then, looking from side to side, she discovered in a corner an earthen pot, which she took with a burst of ominous joy.

"It is not all, it is not all," said Cephyse, as she continued to search with an unquiet air.

At last she perceived near the stove a little tin box, containing flint, steel and matches. She placed these articles on the top of the basket, and took it in one hand, and the earthen pot in the other. As she passed near the corpse of the poor charcoal-dealer, Cephyse said, with a strange smile: "I rob you, poor Mother Arsène, but my theft will not do me much good."

Cephyse left the shop, reclosed the door as well as she could, went up the passage, and crossed the little court-yard which separated the front of the building from that part in which Rodin had lodged. With the exception of the windows of Philemon's apartment, where Rose-Pompon had so often sat perched like a bird, warbling Béranger, the other windows of the house were open. There had been deaths on the first and second floors, and, like many others, they were waiting for the cart piled up with coffins.

The Bacchanal Queen gained the stairs, which led to the chambers formerly occupied by Rodin. Arrived at the landing-place, she ascended another ruinous staircase, steep as a ladder, and with nothing but an old rope for a rail. She at length reached the half-rotten door of a garret, situated in the roof. The house was in such a state of dilapidation, that, in many places the roof gave admission to the rain, and allowed it to penetrate into this cell, which was not above ten feet square, and lighted by an attic window. All the furniture consisted of an old straw mattress, laid upon the ground, with the straw peeping out from a rent in its ticking; a small earthenware pitcher, with the spout broken, and containing a little water, stood by the side of this couch. Dressed in rags, Mother Bunch was seated on the side of the mattress, with her elbows on her knees, and her face concealed in her thin, white hands.

When Cephyse entered the room, the adopted sister of Agricola raised her head; her pale, mild face seemed thinner than ever, hollow with suffering, grief, misery; her eyes, red with weeping, were fixed on her sister with an expression of mournful tenderness.

"I have what we want, sister," said Cephyse, in a low, deep voice; "in this basket there is wherewith to finish our misery."

Then, showing to Mother Bunch the articles she had just placed on the floor, she added: "For the first time in my life, I have been a thief. It made me ashamed and frightened; I was never intended for that or worse. It is a pity," added she, with a sardonic smile.

After a moment's silence, the hunchback said to her sister, in a heart-rending tone: "Cephyse—my dear Cephyse—are you quite determined to die?"

"How should I hesitate?" answered Cephyse, in a firm voice. "Come, sister, let us once more make our reckoning. If even I could forget my shame, and Jacques' contempt in his last moments, what would remain to me? Two courses only: first, to be honest, and work for my living. But you know that, in spite of the best will in the world, work will often fail, as it has failed for the last few days, and, even when I got it, I would have to live on four to five francs a week. Live? that is to say, die by inches. I know that already, and I prefer dying at once. The other course would be to live a life of infamy—and that I will not do. Frankly, sister, between frightful misery, infamy, or death, can the choice be doubtful? Answer me!"

Then, without giving Mother Bunch time to speak, Cephyse added, in an abrupt tone: "Besides, what is the good of discussing it? I have made up my mind, and nothing shall prevent my purpose, since all that you, dear sister, could obtain from me, was a delay of a few days, to see if the cholera would not save us the trouble. To please you I consented; the cholera has come, killed every one else in the house, but left us. You see, it is better to do one's own business," added she, again smiling bitterly. Then she resumed: "Besides, dear sister, you also wish to finish with life."

"It is true, Cephyse," answered the sempstress, who seemed very much depressed; "but alone—one has only to answer for one's self—and to die with you," added she, shuddering, "appears like being an accomplice in your death."

"Do you wish, then, to make an end of it, I in one place, you in another?—that would be agreeable!" said Cephyse, displaying in that terrible moment the sort of bitter and despairing irony which is more frequent than may be imagined in the midst of mortal anguish.

"Oh, no, no!" said the other in alarm, "not alone—I will not die alone!"

"Do you not see, dear sister, we are right not to part? And yet," added Cephyse, in a voice of emotion, "my heart almost breaks sometimes, to think that you will die like me."

"How selfish!" said the hunchback, with a faint smile. "What reasons have I to love life? What void shall I leave behind me?"

"But you are a martyr, sister," resumed Cephyse. "The priests talk of saints! Is there one of them so good as you? And yet you are about to die like me, who have always been idle, careless, sinful—while you were so hard-working, so devoted to all who suffered. What should I say? You were an angel on the earth; and yet you will die like me, who have fallen as low as a woman can fall," added the unfortunate, casting down her eyes.

"It is strange," answered Mother Bunch, thoughtfully. "Starting from the same point, we have followed different roads, and yet we have reached the same goal—disgust of life. For you, my poor sister, but a few days ago, life was so fair, so full of pleasure and of youth; and now it is equally heavy with us both. After all, I have followed to the end what was my duty," added she, mildly. "Agricóla no longer needs me. He is married; he loves, and is beloved; his happiness is secured. Mdlle. de Cardoville wants for nothing. Fair, rich, prosperous—what could a poor creature like myself do for her? Those who have been kind to me are happy. What prevents my going now to my rest? I am so weary!"

"Poor sister!" said Cephyse, with touching emotion, which seemed to expand her contracted features; "when I think that, without informing me, and in spite of your resolution never to see that generous young lady, who protected you, you yet had the courage to drag yourself to her house, dying with fatigue and want, to try to interest her in my fate—yes, dying, for your strength failed on the Champs-Elysées."

"And when I was able to reach the mansion, Mdlle. de Cardoville was unfortunately absent—very unfortunately!"

repeated the hunchback, as she looked at Cephyse with anguish; "for the next day, seeing that our last resource had failed us, thinking more of me than of yourself, and determined at any price to procure us bread——"

She could not finish. She buried her face in her hands, and shuddered.

"Well, I did as so many other hapless women have done when work fails or wages do not suffice, and hunger becomes too pressing," replied Cephyse, in a broken voice; "only that, unlike so many others, instead of living on my shame, I shall die of it."

"Alas! this terrible shame which kills you, my poor Cephyse, because you have a heart, would have been averted, had I seen Mdlle. de Cardoville, or had she but answered the letter which I asked leave to write to her at the porter's lodge. But her silence proves to me that she is justly hurt at my abrupt departure from her house. I can understand it; she believes me guilty of the blackest ingratitude—for she must have been greatly offended not to have deigned to answer me—and therefore I had not the courage to write a second time. It would have been useless, I am sure; for, good and just as she is, her refusals are inexorable when she believes them deserved. And besides, for what good? It was too late; you had resolved to die!"

"Oh, yes, quite resolved: for my infamy was gnawing at my heart. Jacques had died in my arms despising me; and I loved him—mark me, sister," added Cephyse, with passionate enthusiasm, "I loved him as we love only once in life!"

"Let our fate be accomplished, then!" said Mother Bunch, with a pensive air.

"But you have never told me, sister, the cause of your departure from Mdlle. de Cardoville's," resumed Cephyse, after a moment's silence.

"It will be the only secret that I shall take with me, dear Cephyse," said the other, casting down her eyes. And she thought, with bitter joy, that she would soon be delivered from the fear which had poisoned the last days of her sad life—the fear of meeting Agricola, informed of the fatal and ridiculous love she felt for him.

For, it must be said, this fatal and despairing love was one of the causes of the suicide of the unfortunate creature. Since the disappearance of her journal, she believed that the blacksmith knew the melancholy secret contained in its sad pages. She doubted not the generosity and good heart of

Agricola; but she had such doubts of herself, she was so ashamed of this passion, however pure and noble, that, even in the extremity to which Cephyse and herself were reduced—wanting work, wanting bread—no power on earth could have induced her to meet Agricola, in an attempt to ask him for assistance. Doubtless, she would have taken another view of the subject if her mind had not been obscured by that sort of dizziness to which the firmest characters are exposed when their misfortunes surpass all bounds. Misery, hunger, the influence, almost contagious in such a moment, of the suicidal ideas of Cephyse, and weariness of a life so long devoted to pain and mortification, gave the last blow to the sewing-girl's reason. After long struggling against the fatal design of her sister, the poor, dejected, broken-hearted creature finished by determining to share Cephyse's fate, and seek in death the end of so many evils.

"Of what are you thinking, sister?" said Cephyse, astonished at the long silence. The other replied, trembling: "I think of that which made me leave Mdlle. de Cardoville so abruptly, and appear so ungrateful in her eyes. May the fatality which drove me from her house have made no other victims! may my devoted service, however obscure and powerless, never be missed by her, who extended her noble hand to the poor sempstress, and deigned to call me sister! May she be happy—oh, ever happy!" said Mother Bunch, clasping her hands with the ardor of a sincere invocation.

"That is noble, sister—such a wish in such a moment!" said Cephyse.

"Oh," said her sister, with energy, "I loved, I admired that marvel of genius, and heart, and ideal beauty—I viewed her with pious respect—for never was the power of the Divinity revealed in a more adorable and purer creation. At least one of my last thoughts will have been of her."

"Yes, you will have loved and respected your generous patroness to the last."

"To the last!" said the poor girl, after a moment's silence. "It is true—you are right—it will soon be the last!—in a few moments, all will be finished. See how calmly we can talk of that which frightens so many others!"

"Sister, we are calm because we are resolved."

"Quite resolved, Cephyse!" said the hunchback, casting once more a deep and penetrating glance upon her sister.

"Oh, yes, if you are only as determined as I am."

"Be satisfied; if I put off from day to day the final mo-

ment," answered the sempstress, "it was because I wished to give you time to reflect. As for me——"

She did not finish, but she shook her head with an air of the utmost despondency.

"Well, sister, let us kiss each other," said Cephyse; "and, courage!"

The hunchback rose, and threw herself into her sister's arms. They held one another fast in a long embrace. There followed a few seconds of deep and solemn silence, only interrupted by the sobs of the sisters, for now they had begun to weep.

"Oh, heaven! to love each other so, and to part forever!" said Cephyse. "It is a cruel fate."

"To part?" cried Mother Bunch, and her pale, mild countenance, bathed in tears, was suddenly illumined with a ray of divine hope; "to part, sister? oh, no! What makes me so calm is the deep and certain expectation, which I feel here at my heart, of that better world where a better life awaits us. God, so great, so merciful, so prodigal of good, cannot destine His creatures to be forever miserable. Selfish men may pervert His benevolent designs, and reduce their brethren to a state of suffering and despair. Let us pity the wicked and leave them! Come up on high, sister; men are nothing there, where God is all. We shall do well there. Let us depart, for it is late."

So saying, she pointed to the ruddy beams of the setting sun, which began to shine upon the window.

Carried away by the religious enthusiasm of her sister, whose countenance, transfigured, as it were, by the hope of an approaching deliverance, gleamed brightly in the reflected sunset, Cephyse took her hands, and, looking at her with deep emotion, exclaimed, "Oh, sister! how beautiful you look now!"

"Then my beauty comes rather late in the day," said Mother Bunch, with a sad smile.

"No, sister; for you appear so happy, that the last scruples I had upon your account are quite gone."

"Then let us make haste," said the hunchback, as she pointed to the chafing-dish.

"Be satisfied, sister—it will not be long," said Cephyse. And she took the chafing-dish full of charcoal, which she had placed in a corner of the garret, and brought it out into the middle of the room.

"Do you know how to manage it?" asked the sewing-girl approaching.

"Oh! it is very simple," answered Cephyse; "we have only to close the door and window, and light the charcoal."

"Yes, sister; but I think I have heard that every opening must be well stopped, so as to admit no current of air."

"You are right, and the door shuts so badly."

"And look at the holes in the roof."

"What is to be done, sister?"

"I will tell you," said Mother Bunch. "The straw of our mattress, well twisted, will answer every purpose."

"Certainly," replied Cephyse. "We will keep a little to light our fire, and with the rest we will stop up all the crevices in the roof, and make filling for our doors and windows."

Then, smiling with that bitter irony, so frequent, we repeat, in the most gloomy moments, Cephyse added, "I say, sister, weather-boards at our doors and windows, to prevent the air from getting in—what a luxury! we are as delicate as rich people."

"At such a time, we may as well try to make ourselves a little comfortable," said Mother Bunch, trying to jest like the Bacchanal Queen.

And with incredible coolness, the two began to twist the straw into lengths of braid, small enough to be stuffed into the cracks of the door, and also constructed large plugs, destined to stop up the crevices in the roof. While this mournful occupation lasted, there was no departure from the calm and sad resignation of the two unfortunate creatures.

CHAPTER XXXII.

SUICIDE.

Cephyse and her sister continued with calmness the preparations for their death.

Alas! how many poor young girls, like these sisters, have been, and still will be, fatally driven to seek in suicide a refuge from despair, from infamy, or from a too miserable existence! And upon society will rest the terrible responsibility of these sad deaths, so long as thousands of human creatures, unable to live upon the mockery of wages granted to their labor, have to choose between these three gulfs of shame and woe: a life of enervating toil and mortal privations, causes of premature death; prostitution, which kills also, but slowly—by contempt, brutality, and uncleanness; suicide—which kills at once.

In a few minutes, the two sisters had constructed, with the straw of their couch, the calkings necessary to intercept the air, and to render suffocation more expeditious and certain.

The hunchback said to her sister, "You are the taller, Cephyse, and must look to the ceiling; I will take care of the window and door."

"Be satisfied, sister; I shall have finished before you," answered Cephyse.

And the two began carefully to stop up every crevice through which a current of air could penetrate into the ruined garret. Thanks to her tall stature, Cephyse was able to reach the holes in the roof, and to close them up entirely. When they had finished this sad work, the sisters again approached, and looked at each other in silence.

The fatal moment drew near; their faces, though still calm, seemed slightly agitated by that strange excitement which always accompanies a double suicide.

"Now," said Mother Bunch, "now for the fire!"

She knelt down before the little chafing-dish, filled with charcoal. But Cephyse took hold of her under the arm, and obliged her to rise again, saying to her, "Let me light the fire—that is my business."

"But, Cephyse——"

"You know, poor sister, that the smell of charcoal gives you the headache!"

At the simplicity of this speech, for the Bacchanal Queen had spoken seriously, the sisters could not forbear smiling sadly.

"Never mind," resumed Cephyse; "why suffer more and sooner than is necessary?"

Then, pointing to the mattress, which still contained a little straw, Cephyse added, "Lie down there, good little sister; when our fire is alight, I will come and sit down by you."

"Do not be long, Cephyse."

"In five minutes it will be done."

The tall building, which faced the street, was separated by a narrow court from that which contained the retreat of the two sisters, and was so much higher, that, when the sun had once disappeared behind its lofty roof, the garret soon became dark. The light, passing through the dirty panes of the small window, fell faintly on the blue and white patchwork of the old mattress, on which Mother Bunch was now stretched, covered with rags. Leaning on her left arm, with

her chin resting in the palm of her hand, she looked after her sister with an expression of heart-rending grief. Cephyse, kneeling over the chafing-dish, with her face close to the black charcoal, above which already played a little bluish flame, exerted herself to blow the newly-kindled fire, which was reflected on the pale countenance of the unhappy girl.

The silence was deep. No sound was heard but the panting breath of Cephyse, and, at intervals, the slight crackling of the charcoal, which began to burn, and already sent forth a faint, sickening vapor. Cephyse, seeing the fire completely lighted, and feeling already a little dizzy, rose from the ground, and said to her sister, as she approached her, "It is done!"

"Sister," answered Mother Bunch, kneeling on the mattress, whilst Cephyse remained standing, "how shall we place ourselves? I should like to be near you to the last."

"Stop!" said Cephyse, half executing the measures of which she spoke, "I will sit on the mattress with my back against the wall. Now, little sister, you lie there. Lean your head upon my knees, and give me your hand. Are you comfortable so?"

"Yes—but I cannot see you."

"That is better. It seems there is a moment—very short, it is true—in which one suffers a good deal. And," added Cephyse, in a voice of emotion, "it will be as well not to see each other suffer."

"You are right, Cephyse."

"Let me kiss that beautiful hair for the last time," said Cephyse, as she pressed her lips to the silky locks which crowned the hunchback's pale and melancholy countenance, "and then—we will remain very quiet."

"Sister, your hand," said the sewing-girl; "for the last time, your hand—and then, as you say, we will move no more. We shall not have to wait long, I think, for I begin to feel dizzy. And you, sister?"

"Not yet," replied Cephyse; "I only perceive the smell of the charcoal."

"Do you know where they will bury us?" said Mother Bunch, after a moment's silence.

"No. Why do you ask?"

"Because I should like it to be in Père-la-Chaise. I went there once with Agricola and his mother. What a fine view there is!—and then the trees, the flowers, the marble—do you know the dead are better lodged—than the living—and——"

"What is the matter, sister?" said Cephyse to her companion, who had stopped short, after speaking in a slow voice.

"I am giddy—my temples throb," was the answer. "How do you feel?"

"I only begin to be a little faint; it is strange—the effect is slower with me than you."

"Oh! you see," said Mother Bunch, trying to smile, "I was always so forward. At school, do you remember, they said I was before the others. And now it happens again."

"I hope soon to overtake you this time," said Cephyse.

What astonished the sisters was quite natural. Though weakened by sorrow and misery, the Bacchanal Queen, with a constitution as robust as the other was frail and delicate, was necessarily longer than her sister in feeling the effects of the deleterious vapor. After a moment's silence, Cephyse resumed, as she laid her hand on the head she still held upon her knees, "You say nothing, sister! You suffer, is it not so?"

"No," said Mother Bunch, in a weak voice; "my eyelids are heavy as lead—I am getting benumbed—I feel that I speak more slowly—but I have no acute pain. And you, sister?"

"Whilst you were speaking, I felt giddy—and now my temples throb violently."

"As it was with me just now. One would think it was more painful and difficult to die."

Then after a moment's silence, the hunchback said suddenly to her sister, "Do you think that Agricola will much regret me, and think of me for some time?"

"How can you ask?" said Cephyse, in a tone of reproach.

"You are right," answered Mother Bunch, mildly; "there is a bad feeling in such a doubt—but if you knew——"

"What, sister?"

The other hesitated for an instant, and then said, dejectedly, "Nothing." Afterwards, she added, "Fortunately, I die convinced that he will never miss me. He married a charming girl, who loves him, I am sure, and will make him perfectly happy."

As she pronounced these last words, the speaker's voice grew fainter and fainter. Suddenly she started and said to Cephyse, in a trembling, almost frightened tone, "Sister!—hold me in your arms—I am afraid everything looks dark—everything is turning round." And the unfortunate girl, raising herself a little, hid her face in her sister's bosom, and threw her weak arms around her.

"Courage, sister!" said Cephyse, in a voice which was also growing faint, as she pressed her closer to her bosom; "it will soon be over."

And Cephyse added, with a kind of envy, "Oh! why does my sister's strength fail so much sooner than mine? I have still my perfect senses, and I suffer less than she does. Oh! if I thought she would die first!—But, no—I will go and hold my face over the chafing-dish rather."

At the movement Cephyse made to rise, a feeble pressure from her sister held her back. "You suffer, my poor child!" said Cephyse, trembling.

"Oh, yes! a good deal now—do not leave me!"

"And I scarcely at all," said Cephyse, gazing wildly at the chafing-dish. "Ah!" added she, with a kind of fatal joy; "now I begin to feel it—I choke—my head is ready to split."

And indeed the destructive gas now filled the little chamber, from which it had, by degrees, driven all the air fit for respiration. The day was closing in, and the gloomy garret was only lighted by the reflection of the burning charcoal, which threw a red glare on the sisters, locked in each other's arms. Suddenly Mother Bunch made some slight convulsive movements, and pronounced these words in a failing voice: "Agricola—Mademoiselle de Cardoville—Oh! farewell!—Agricola—I——"

Then she murmured some unintelligible words; the convulsive movements ceased, and her arms, which had been clasped round Cephyse, fell inert upon the mattress.

"Sister!" cried Cephyse, in alarm, as she raised Mother Bunch's head, to look at her face. "Not already, sister!—And I? and I?"

The sewing-girl's mild countenance was not paler than usual. Only her eyes, half-closed, seemed no longer to see anything, and a half-smile of mingled grief and goodness lingered an instant about her violet lips, from which stole the almost imperceptible breath—and then the mouth became motionless, and the face assumed a great serenity of expression.

"But you must not die before me!" cried Cephyse, in a heart-rending tone, as she covered with kisses the cold cheek. "Wait for me, sister! wait for me!"

Mother Bunch did not answer. The head, which Cephyse let slip from her hands, fell back gently on the mattress.

"My God! It is not my fault, if we do not die together!"

cried Cephyse in despair, as she knelt beside the couch, on which the other lay motionless.

"Dead!" she murmured in terror. "Dead before me!—Perhaps it is that I am the strongest. Ah! it begins—fortunately—like her, I see everything dark-blue—I suffer—what happiness!—I can scarcely breathe. Sister!" she added, as she threw her arms round her loved one's neck; "I am coming—I am here!"

At the same instant the sound of footsteps and voices was heard from the staircase. Cephyse had still presence of mind enough to distinguish the sound. Stretched beside the body of her sister, she raised her head hastily.

The noise approached, and a voice was heard exclaiming, not far from the door: "Good heavens! what a smell of fire!"

And, at the same instant, the door was violently shaken, and another voice exclaimed: "Open! open!"

"They will come in—they will save me—and my sister is dead—Oh, no! I will not have the baseness to survive her!"

Such was the last thought of Cephyse. Using what little strength she had left, she ran to the window and opened it—and, at the same instant that the half-broken door yielded to a vigorous effort from without, the unfortunate creature precipitated herself from that third story into the court below. Just then, Adrienne and Agricola appeared on the threshold of the chamber. In spite of the stifling odor of the charcoal, Mdlle. de Cardoville rushed into the garret, and, seeing the stove, she exclaimed: "The unhappy girl has killed herself!"

"No, she has thrown herself from the window," cried Agricola: for, at the moment of breaking open the door, he had seen a human form disappear in that direction, and he now ran to the window.

"Oh! this is frightful!" he exclaimed, with a cry of horror, as he put his hand before his eyes, and returned pale and terrified to Mdlle. de Cardoville.

But, misunderstanding the cause of his terror, Adrienne, who had just perceived Mother Bunch through the darkness, hastened to answer: "No! she is here."

And she pointed to the pale form stretched on the mattress, beside which Adrienne now threw herself on her knees. Grasping the hands of the poor sempstress, she found them as cold as ice. Laying her hand on her heart, she could not feel it beat. Yet, in a few seconds, as the fresh air rushed into the room from the door and window, Adri-

enne thought she remarked an almost imperceptible pulsation, and she exclaimed: "Her heart beats! Run quickly for help! Luckily, I have my smelling bottle."

"Yes, yes! help for her—and for the other too, if it is yet time!" cried the smith in despair, as he rushed down the stairs, leaving Mdlle. de Cardoville still kneeling by the side of the mattress.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

CONFESSIONS.

During the painful scene that we have just described, a lively emotion glowed in the countenance of Mdlle. de Cardoville, grown pale and thin with sorrow. Her cheeks, once so full, were now slightly hollowed, whilst a faint line of transparent azure encircled those large black eyes, no longer so bright as formerly. But the charming lips, though contracted by painful anxiety, had retained their rich and velvet moisture. To attend more easily to Mother Bunch, Adrienne had thrown aside her bonnet, and the silky waves of her beautiful golden hair almost concealed her face as she bent over the mattress, rubbing the thin, ivory hands of the poor sempstress, completely called to life by the salubrious freshness of the air, and by the strong action of the salts which Adrienne carried in her smelling-bottle. Luckily, Mother Bunch had fainted, rather from emotion and weakness than from the effects of suffocation, the senses of the unfortunate girl having failed her before the deleterious gas had attained its highest degree of intensity.

Before continuing the recital of the scene between the sempstress and the patrician, a few retrospective words will be necessary. Since the strange adventure at the theatre of the Porte-Saint-Martin, where Djalma, at peril of his life, rushed upon the black panther in sight of Mdlle. de Cardoville, the young lady had been deeply affected in various ways. Forgetting her jealousy, and the humiliation she had suffered in presence of Djalma—of Djalma exhibiting himself before every one with a woman so little worthy of him—Adrienne was for a moment dazzled by the chivalrous and heroic action of the prince, and said to herself: "In spite of odious appearances, Djalma loves me enough to brave death in order to pick up my nosegay."

But with a soul so delicate as that of this young lady, a

character so generous, and a mind so true, reflection was certain soon to demonstrate the vanity of such consolations, powerless to cure the cruel wounds of offended dignity and love.

"How many times," said Adrienne to herself, and with reason, "has the prince encountered, in hunting, from pure caprice and with no gain, such danger as he braved in picking up my bouquet! and then, who tells me he did not mean to offer it to the woman who accompanied him?"

Singular (it may be) in the eyes of the world, but just and great in those of heaven, the ideas which Adrienne cherished with regard to love, joined to her natural pride, presented an invincible obstacle to the thought of her succeeding this woman (whoever she might be), thus publicly displayed by the prince as his mistress. And yet Adrienne hardly dared avow to herself, that she experienced a feeling of jealousy, only the more painful and humiliating, the less her rival appeared worthy to be compared to her.

At other times, on the contrary, in spite of a conscious sense of her own value, Mdlle. de Cardoville, remembering the charming countenance of Rose-Pompon, asked herself if the bad taste and improper manners of this pretty creature resulted from precocious and depraved effrontery, or from a complete ignorance of the usages of society. In the latter case, such ignorance, arising from a simple and ingenuous nature, might in itself have a great charm; and if to this attraction, combined with that of incontestable beauty, were added sincere love and a pure soul, the obscure birth, or neglected education of the girl might be of little consequence, and she might be capable of inspiring Djalma with a profound passion. If Adrienne hesitated to see a lost creature in Rose-Pompon, notwithstanding unfavorable appearances, it was because, remembering what so many travellers had related of Djalma's greatness of soul, and recalling the conversation she had overheard between him and Rodin, she could not bring herself to believe that a man of such remarkable intelligence, with so tender a heart, so poetical, imaginative and enthusiastic a mind could be capable of loving a depraved and vulgar creature, and of openly exhibiting himself in public along with her. There was a mystery in the transaction, which Adrienne sought in vain to penetrate. These trying doubts, this cruel curiosity, only served to nourish Adrienne's fatal love; and we may imagine her incurable despair, when she found that the indifference, or even disdain of Djalma, was unable to stifle a passion that

now burned more fiercely than ever. Sometimes, having recourse to notions of fatality, she fancied that she was destined to feel this love, that Djalma must therefore deserve it, and that one day whatever was incomprehensible in the conduct of the prince would be explained to his advantage. At other times, on the contrary, she felt ashamed of excusing Djalma, and the consciousness of this weakness was for Adrienne a constant occasion for remorse and torture. The victim of all these agonies, she lived in perfect solitude.

The cholera soon broke out, startling as a clap of thunder. Too unhappy to fear the pestilence on her own account, Adrienne was only moved by the sorrows of others. She was amongst the first to contribute to those charitable donations, which were now flowing in from all sides in the admirable spirit of benevolence. Florine was suddenly attacked by the epidemic. In spite of the danger, her mistress insisted on seeing her, and endeavored to revive her failing courage. Conquered by this new mark of kindness, Florine could no longer conceal the treachery in which she had borne a part. Death was about to deliver her from the odious tyranny of the people whose yoke weighed upon her, and she was at length in a position to reveal everything to Adrienne. The latter thus learned how she had been continually betrayed by Florine, and also the cause of the sewing-girl's abrupt departure. At these revelations, Adrienne felt her affection and tender pity for the poor sempstress greatly increase. By her command, the most active steps were taken to discover traces of the hunchback; but Florine's confession had a still more important result. Justly alarmed at this new evidence of Rodin's machinations, Adrienne remembered the projects formed, when, believing herself beloved, the instinct of affection had revealed to her the perils to which Djalma and the other members of the Rennepont family were exposed. To assemble the race around her, and bid them rally against the common enemy, such was Adrienne's first thought, when she heard the confession of Florine. She regarded it as a duty to accomplish this project. In a struggle with such dangerous and powerful adversaries as Rodin, Father d'Aigrigny, and the Princess de Saint-Dizier, and their allies, Adrienne saw not only the praiseworthy and perilous task of unmasking hypocrisy and cupidity, but also, if not a consolation, at least a generous diversion in the midst of terrible sorrows.

From this moment, a restless, feverish activity took the place of the mournful apathy in which the young lady had

languished. She called round her all the members of her family capable of answering the appeal, and, as had been mentioned in the secret note delivered to Father d'Aigrigny, Cardoville House soon became the centre of the most active and unceasing operations, and also a place of meeting, in which the modes of attack and defence were fully discussed. Perfectly correct in all points, the secret note of which we have spoken stated, as a mere conjecture, that Mdlle. de Cardoville had granted an interview to Djalma. This fact was untrue, but the cause which led to the supposition will be explained hereafter. Far from such being the case, Mdlle. de Cardoville scarcely found, in attending to the great family interests now at stake, a momentary diversion from the fatal love, which was slowly undermining her health, and with which she so bitterly reproached herself.

The morning of the day on which Adrienne, at length discovering Mother Bunch's residence, came so miraculously to rescue her from death, Agricola Baudoin had been to Cardoville House to confer on the subject of Francis Hardy, and had begged Adrienne to permit him to accompany her to the Rue Clovis, whither they repaired in haste.

Thus, once again, there was a noble spectacle, a touching symbol! Mdlle. de Cardoville and Mother Bunch, the two extremities of the social chain, were united on equal terms —for the sempstress and the fair patrician were equal in intelligence and heart—and equal also, because the one was the ideal of riches, grace, and beauty, and the other the ideal of resignation and unmerited misfortune—and does not a halo rest on misfortune borne with courage and dignity? Stretched on her mattress, the hunchback appeared so weak, that even if Agricola had not been detained on the ground-floor with Cephyse, now dying a dreadful death, Mdlle. de Cardoville would have waited some time, before inducing Mother Bunch to rise and accompany her to her carriage. Thanks to the presence of mind and pious fraud of Adrienne, the sewing-girl was persuaded that Cephyse had been carried to a neighboring hospital, to receive the necessary succors, which promised to be crowned with success. The hunchback's faculties recovering slowly from their stupor, she at first received this fable without the least suspicion—for she did not even know that Agricola had accompanied Mdlle. de Cardoville.

"And it is to you, lady, that Cephyse and I owe our lives," said she, turning her mild and melancholy face towards Adrienne, "*you*, kneeling in this garret, near this couch of

misery, where I and my sister meant to die—for you assure me, lady, that Cephyse was succored in time."

"Be satisfied! I was told just now that she was recovering her senses."

"And they told her I was living, did they not, lady? Otherwise, she would perhaps regret having survived me."

"Be quite easy, my dear girl!" said Adrienne, pressing the poor hands in her own, and gazing on her with eyes full of tears; "they have told her all that was proper. Do not trouble yourself about anything; only think of recovering—and I hope you will yet enjoy that happiness of which you have known so little, my poor child."

"How kind you are, lady! After flying from your house—and when you must think me so ungrateful!"

"Presently, when you are not so weak, I have a great deal to tell you. Just now, it would fatigue you too much. But how do you feel?"

"Better, lady. This fresh air—and then the thought, that, since you are come—my poor sister will no more be reduced to despair; for I will tell you all, and I am sure you will have pity on Cephyse—will you not, lady?"

"Rely upon me, my child," answered Adrienne, forced to dissemble her painful embarrassment; "you know I am interested in all that interests you. But tell me," added Mdlle. de Cardoville, in a voice of emotion, "before taking this desperate resolution, did you not write to me?"

"Yes, lady."

"Alas!" resumed Adrienne, sorrowfully; "and when you received no answer—how cruel, how ungrateful you must have thought me!"

"Oh! never, lady, did I accuse you of such feelings; my poor sister will tell you so. You had my gratitude to the last."

"I believe you—for I know your heart. But how then did you explain my silence?"

"I had justly offended you by my sudden departure, lady."

"Offended!—Alas! I never received your letter."

"And yet you know that I wrote to you, lady."

"Yes, my poor girl; I know, also, that you wrote to me at my porter's lodge. Unfortunately, he delivered your letter to one of my women, named Florine, telling her it came from you."

"Florine! the young woman that was so kind to me!"

"Florine deceived me shamefully: she was sold to my enemies, and acted as a spy on my actions."

"*She!*—Good Heavens!" cried Mother Bunch. "Is it possible?"

"She herself," answered Adrienne, bitterly; "but, after all, we must pity as well as blame her. She was forced to obey by a terrible necessity, and her confession and repentance secured my pardon before her death."

"Then she is dead—so young! so fair!"

"In spite of her faults, I was greatly moved by her end. She confessed what she had done, with such heart-rending regrets. Amongst her avowals, she told me she had intercepted a letter, in which you asked for an interview that might save your sister's life."

"It is true, lady; such were the terms of my letter. What interest had they to keep it from you?"

"They feared to see you return to me, my good guardian angel. You loved me so tenderly, and my enemies dreaded your faithful affection, so wonderfully aided by the admirable instinct of your heart. Ah! I shall never forget how well-deserved was the horror with which you were inspired by a wretch whom I defended against your suspicions."

"M. Rodin?" said Mother Bunch, with a shudder.

"Yes," replied Adrienne; "but we will not talk of these people now. Their odious remembrance would spoil the joy I feel in seeing you restored to life—for your voice is less feeble, your cheeks are beginning to regain a little color. Thank God! I am so happy to have found you once more; —if you knew all that I hope, all that I expect from our reunion—for we will not part again—promise me that, in the name of our friendship."

"I—your friend!" said Mother Bunch, timidly casting down her eyes.

"A few days before your departure from my house, did I not call you my friend, my sister? What is there changed? Nothing, nothing," added Mdlle. de Cardoville, with deep emotion. "One might say, on the contrary, that a fatal resemblance in our positions renders your friendship even dearer to me. And I shall have it, shall I not? Oh, do not refuse it me—I am so much in want of a friend!"

"You, lady? you in want of the friendship of a poor creature like me?"

"Yes," answered Adrienne, as she gazed on the other with an expression of intense grief; "nay, more, you are perhaps the only person, to whom I could venture to confide my

bitter sorrows." So saying, Mdlle. de Cardoville colored deeply.

"And how do I deserve such marks of confidence?" asked Mother Bunch, more and more surprised.

"You deserve it by the delicacy of your heart, by the steadiness of your character," answered Adrienne, with some hesitation; "then—you are a woman—and I am certain you will understand what I suffer, and pity me."

"Pity you, lady?" said the other, whose astonishment continued to increase. "You, a great lady, and so much envied—I, so humble and despised, pity you?"

"Tell me, my poor friend," resumed Adrienne, after some moments of silence, "are not the worst griefs those which we dare not avow to any one, for fear of raillery and contempt? How can we venture to ask interest or pity, for sufferings that we hardly dare avow to ourselves, because they make us blush?"

The sewing-girl could hardly believe what she heard. Had her benefactress felt, like her, the effects of an unfortunate passion, she could not have held any other language. But the sempstress could not admit such a supposition; so, attributing to some other cause the sorrows of Adrienne, she answered mournfully, whilst she thought of her own fatal love for Agricola, "Oh! yes, lady. A secret grief, of which we are ashamed, must be frightful—very frightful!"

"But then what happiness to meet, not only a heart noble enough to inspire complete confidence, but one which has itself been tried by a thousand sorrows, and is capable of affording you pity, support and counsel!—Tell me, my dear child," added Mdlle. de Cardoville, as she looked attentively at Mother Bunch, "if you were weighed down by one of those sorrows, at which one blushes, would you not be happy, very happy, to find a kindred soul, to whom you might entrust your griefs, and half relieve them by entire and merited confidence?"

For the first time in her life, Mother Bunch regarded Mdlle. de Cardoville with a feeling of suspicion and sadness.

The last words of the young lady seemed to her full of meaning. "Doubtless, she knows my secret," said Mother Bunch to herself; "doubtless, my journal has fallen into her hands.—She knows my love for Agricola, or at least suspects it. What she has been saying to me is intended to provoke my confidence, and to assure herself if she has been rightly informed."

These thoughts excited in the workgirl's mind no bitter or ungrateful feeling towards her benefactress; but the heart of the unfortunate girl was so delicately susceptible on the subject of her fatal passion, that, in spite of her deep and tender affection for Mdlle. de Cardoville, she suffered cruelly at the thought of Adrienne's being mistress of her secret.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

MORE CONFESSIONS.

The fancy, at first so painful, that Mdlle. de Cardoville was informed of her love for Agricola, was soon exchanged in the hunchback's heart, thanks to the generous instincts of that rare and excellent creature, for a touching regret, which showed all her attachment and veneration for Adrienne.

"Perhaps," said Mother Bunch to herself, "conquered by the influence of the adorable kindness of my protectress, I might have made to her a confession which I could make to none other, and revealed a secret which I thought to carry with me to my grave. It would, at least, have been a mark of gratitude to Mdlle. de Cardoville; but, unfortunately, I am now deprived of the sad comfort of confiding my only secret to my benefactress. And then—however generous may be her pity for me, however intelligent her affection, she cannot—she, that is so fair and so much admired—she cannot understand how frightful is the position of a creature like myself, hiding in the depth of a wounded heart, a love at once hopeless and ridiculous. No, no—in spite of the delicacy of her attachment, my benefactress must unconsciously hurt my feelings, even whilst she pities me—for only sympathetic sorrows can console each other. Alas! why did she not leave me to die?"

These reflections presented themselves to the thinker's mind as rapidly as thought could travel. Adrienne observed her attentively; she remarked that the sewing-girl's countenance, which had lately brightened up, was again clouded, and expressed a feeling of painful humiliation. Terrified at this relapse into gloomy dejection, the consequences of which might be serious, for Mother Bunch was still very weak, and, as it were, hovering on the brink of the grave, Mdlle. de Cardoville resumed hastily: "My friend, do not

you think with me, that the most cruel and humiliating grief admits of consolation, when it can be entrusted to a faithful and devoted heart?"

"Yes, lady," said the young sempstress, bitterly; "but the heart which suffers in silence, should be the only judge of the moment for making so painful a confession. Until then, it would perhaps be more humane to respect its fatal secret, even if one had by chance discovered it."

"You are right, my child," said Adrienne, sorrowfully; "if I choose this solemn moment to entrust you with a very painful secret, it is that, when you have heard me, I am sure you will set more value on your life, as knowing how much I need your tenderness, consolation, and pity."

At these words, the other half raised herself on the mattress, and looked at Mdlle. de Cardoville in amazement. She could scarcely believe what she heard; far from designing to intrude upon her confidence, it was her protectress who was to make the painful confession, and who came to implore pity and consolation from her!

"What!" stammered she; "you, lady!"

"I come to tell you that I suffer, and am ashamed of my sufferings. Yes," added the young lady, with a touching expression, "yes—of all confessions, I am about to make the most painful—I love—and I blush for my love."

"Like myself!" cried Mother Bunch, involuntarily, clasping her hands together.

"I love," resumed Adrienne, with a long-pent-up grief; "I love, and am not beloved—and my love is miserable, is impossible—it consumes me—it kills me—and I dare not confide to any one the fatal secret!"

"Like me," repeated the other, with a fixed look. "She—a queen in beauty, rank, wealth, intelligence—suffers like me. Like me, poor unfortunate creature! she loves, and is not loved again."

"Well, yes! like you, I love and am not loved again," cried Mdlle. de Cardoville; "was I wrong in saying, that to you alone I could confide my secret—because, having suffered the same pangs, you alone can pity them?"

"Then, lady," said Mother Bunch, casting down her eyes, and recovering from her first amazement, "you knew——"

"I knew all, my poor child—but never should I have mentioned your secret, had I not had one to entrust you with, of a still more painful nature. Yours is cruel, but mine is humiliating. Oh, my sister!" added Mdlle. de Cardoville, in a tone impossible to describe, "misfortune, you

see, blends and confounds together what are called distinctions of rank and fortune—and often those whom the world envies are reduced by suffering far below the poorest and most humble, and have to seek from the latter pity and consolation."

Then, drying her tears, which now flowed abundantly, Mdlle. de Cardoville resumed, in a voice of emotion: "Come, sister! courage, courage! let us love and sustain each other. Let this sad and mysterious bond unite us forever."

"Oh, lady! forgive me. But now that you know the secret of my life," said the workgirl, casting down her eyes, and unable to vanquish her confusion, "it seems to me, that I can never look at you without blushing."

"And why? because you love Agricola?" said Adrienne. "Then I must die of shame before you, since, less courageous than you, I had not the strength to suffer and be resigned, and so conceal my love in the depths of my heart. He that I love, with a love henceforth deprived of hope, knew of that love and despised it—preferring to me a woman, the very choice of whom was a new and grievous insult, if I am not much deceived by appearances. I sometimes hope that I am deceived on this point. Now tell me—is it for you to blush?"

"Alas, lady! who could tell you all this?"

"Which you only entrusted to your journal? Well, then—it was the dying Florine who confessed her misdeeds. She had been base enough to steal your papers, forced to this odious act, by the people who had dominion over her. But she had read your journal—and as every good feeling was not dead within her, your admirable resignation, your melancholy and pious love, had left such an impression on her mind, that she was able to repeat whole passages to me on her death bed, and thus to explain the cause of your sudden disappearance—for she had no doubt that the fear of seeing your love for Agricola divulged had been the cause of your flight.'

"Alas! it is but too true, lady."

"Oh, yes!" answered Adrienne, bitterly; "those who employed the wretched girl to act as she did, well knew the effect of the blow. It was not their first attempt. They reduced you to despair, they would have killed you, because you were devoted to me, and because you had guessed their intentions. Oh! these black-gowns are implacable, and their power is great!" said Adrienne, shuddering.

"It is fearful, lady."

"But do not be alarmed, dear child; you see, that the arms of the wicked have turned against themselves; for the moment I knew the cause of your flight, you became dearer to me than ever. From that time I made every exertion to find out where you were; after long efforts, it was only this morning that the person I had employed succeeded in discovering that you inhabited this house. Agricola was with me when I heard it, and instantly asked to accompany me."

"Agricola!" said Mother Bunch, clasping her hands; "he came——"

"Yes, my child—be calm. Whilst I attended to you, he was busy with your poor sister. You will soon see him."

"Alas, lady!" resumed the hunchback, in alarm. "He doubtless knows——"

"Your love! No, no; be satisfied. Only think of the happiness of again seeing your good and worthy brother."

"Ah, lady! may he never know what caused me so much shame, that I was like to die of it. Thank God, he is not aware of it!"

"Then let us have no more sad thoughts, my child. Only remember, that this worthy brother came here in time to save us from everlasting regrets—and you from a great fault. Oh! I do not speak of the prejudices of the world, with regard to the right of every creature to return to heaven a life that has become too burdensome!—I only say that you ought not to have died, because those who love you, and whom you love, were still in need of your assistance."

"I thought you happy; Agricola was married to the girl of his choice, who will, I am sure, make him happy. To whom could I be useful?"

"First, to myself, as you see—and then, who tells you that Agricola will never have need of you? Who tells you, that his happiness, or that of his family, will last forever, and will not be tried by cruel shocks? And even if those you love had been destined to be always happy, could their happiness be complete without you? And would not your death, with which they would perhaps have reproached themselves, have left behind it endless regrets?"

"It is true, lady," answered the other, "I was wrong—the dizziness of despair had seized me—frightful misery weighed upon us—we had not been able to find work for some days—we lived on the charity of a poor woman, and her the cholera carried off. To-morrow or next day, we must have died of hunger."

"Die of hunger!—and you knew where I lived!"

"I had written to you, lady, and, receiving no answer, I thought you offended at my abrupt departure."

"Poor, dear child! you must have been, as you say, seized with dizziness in that terrible moment; so that I have not the courage to reproach you for doubting me a single instant. How can I blame you? Did I not myself think of terminating my life?"

"You, lady!" cried the hunchback.

"Yes, I thought of it—when they came to tell me, that Florine, dying, wished to speak to me. I heard what she had to say; her revelations changed my projects. This dark and mournful life, which had become insupportable to me, was suddenly lighted up. The sense of duty woke within me. You were no doubt a prey to horrible misery; it was my duty to seek and save you. Florine's confessions unveiled to me the new plots of the enemies of my scattered family, dispersed by sorrows and cruel losses; it was my duty to warn them of their danger, and to unite them against the common enemy. I had been the victim of odious manœuvres: it was my duty to punish their authors, for fear that, encouraged by impunity, these black-gowns should make other victims. Then the sense of duty gave me strength, and I was able to rouse myself from my lethargy. With the help of Abbé Gabriel, a sublime, oh! a sublime priest—the ideal of a true Christian—the worthy brother of Agricola—I courageously entered on the struggle. What shall I say to you, my child? The performance of these duties, the hope of finding you again, have been some relief to me in my trouble. If I was not consoled, I was at least occupied. Your tender friendship, the example of your resignation, will do the rest—I think so—I am sure so—and I shall forget this fatal love."

At the moment Adrienne pronounced these words, rapid footsteps were heard upon the stairs, and a young, clear voice exclaimed: "Oh! dear me, poor Mother Bunch! How lucky I have come just now! If only I could be of some use to her!"

Almost immediately, Rose-Pompon entered the garret with precipitation. Agricola soon followed the grisette, and pointing to the open window, tried to make Adrienne understand by signs, that she was not to mention to the girl the deplorable end of the Bacchanal Queen. This pantomime was lost on Mdlle. de Cardoville. Adrienne's heart swelled with grief, indignation, pride, as she recognized the girl she had seen at the Porte-Saint-Martin in company

with Djalma, and who alone was the cause of the dreadful sufferings she endured since that fatal evening. And, strange irony of fate! it was at the very moment when Adrienne had just made the humiliating and cruel confession of her despised love, that the woman, to whom she believed herself sacrificed, appeared before her.

If the surprise of Mdlle. de Cardoville was great, Rose-Pompon's was not less so. Not only did she recognize in Adrienne the fair young lady with the golden locks, who had sat opposite to her at the theatre, on the night of the adventure of the black panther, but she had serious reasons for desiring most ardently this unexpected interview. It is impossible to paint the look of malignant joy and triumph, that she affected to cast upon Adrienne. The first impulse of Mdlle. de Cardoville was to quit the room. But she could not bear to leave Mother Bunch at this moment, or to give, in the presence of Agricola, her reasons for such an abrupt departure, and moreover, an inexplicable and fatal curiosity held her back, in spite of her offended pride. She remained, therefore, and was about to examine closely, to hear and to judge, this rival, who had nearly occasioned her death, to whom, in her jealous agony, she had ascribed so many different aspects, in order to explain Djalma's love for such a creature.

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE RIVALS.

Rose-Pompon, whose presence caused such deep emotion in Mdlle. de Cardoville, was dressed in the most showy and extravagant bad taste. Her very small, narrow, rose-colored satin bonnet, placed so forward over her face as almost to touch the tip of her little nose, left uncovered behind half of her light, silky hair; her plaid dress, of an excessively broad pattern, was open in front, and the almost transparent gauze, rather too honest in its revelations, hardly covered the charms of the form beneath.

The grisette having run all the way upstairs, held in her hands the ends of her large blue shawl, which, falling from her shoulders, had slid down to her wasp-like waist, and there been stopped by the swell of the figure. If we enter into these details, it is to explain how, at the sight of this pretty creature, dressed in so impertinent and almost inde-

cent, a fashion, Mdlle. de Cardoville, who thought she saw in her a successful rival, felt her indignation, grief, and shame redoubled.

But judge of the surprise and confusion of Adrienne, when Mdlle. Rose-Pompon said to her, with the utmost freedom and pertness, "I am delighted to see you, madame. You and I must have a long talk together. Only I must begin by kissing poor Mother Bunch—with your permission, madame!"

To understand the tone and manner with which this word "madame" was pronounced, you must have been present at some stormy discussion between two Rose-Pompons, jealous of each other; then you would be able to judge how much provoking hostility may be compressed into the word "madame," under certain circumstances. Amazed at the impudence of Rose-Pompon, Mdlle. de Cardoville remained mute; whilst Agricola, entirely occupied with the interest he took in the workgirl, who had never withdrawn her eyes from him since he entered the room, and with the remembrance of the painful scene he had just quitted, whispered to Adrienne, without remarking the grisette's effrontery, "Alas, lady! it is all over. Cephyse has just breathed her last sigh, without recovering her senses."

"Unfortunate girl!" said Adrienne, with emotion; and for the moment she forgot Rose-Pompon.

"We must keep this sad news from Mother Bunch, and only let her know it hereafter, with great caution," resumed Agricola. "Luckily, little Rose-Pompon knows nothing about it."

And he pointed to the grisette, who was now stooping down by the side of the workgirl. On hearing Agricola speak so familiarly of Rose-Pompon, Adrienne's amazement increased. It is impossible to describe what she felt; yet, strangely enough, her sufferings grew less and less, and her anxiety diminished, as she listened to the chatter of the grisette.

"Oh, my good dear!" said the latter, with as much volubility as emotion, while her pretty blue eyes were filled with tears; "is it possible that you did so stupid a thing? Do not poor people help one another? Could you not apply to me? You knew that others are welcome to whatever is mine, and I would have made a raffle of Philemon's bazaar," added this singular girl, with a burst of feeling, at once sincere, touching, and grotesque; "I would have sold his three boots, pipes, boating-costume, bed, and even his great drink-

ing-glass, and at all events you should not have been brought to such an ugly pass. Philemon would not have minded, for he is a good fellow; and if he had minded, it would have been all the same. Thank heaven! we are not married. I am only wishing to remind you that you should have thought of little Rose-Pompon."

"I know you are obliging and kind, miss," said Mother Bunch: for she had heard from her sister that Rose-Pompon, like so many of her class, had a warm and generous heart.

"After all," resumed the grisette, wiping with the back of her hand the tip of her little nose, down which a tear was trickling, "you may tell me that you did not know where I had taken up my quarters. It's a queer story, I can tell you. When I say queer," added Rose-Pompon, with a deep sigh, "it is quite the contrary—but no matter. I need not trouble you with that. One thing is certain; you are getting better—and you and Cephyse will not do such a thing again. She is said to be very weak. Can I not see her yet, M. Agricola?"

"No," said the smith, with embarrassment, for Mother Bunch kept her eyes fixed upon him; "you must have patience."

"But I may see her to-day, Agricola?" exclaimed the hunchback.

"We will talk about that. Only be calm, I entreat."

"Agricola is right; you must be reasonable, my good dear," resumed Rose-Pompon; "we will wait patiently. I can wait too, for I have to talk presently to this lady;" and Rose-Pompon glanced at Adrienne with the expression of an angry cat. "Yes, yes; I can wait; for I long to tell Cephyse also that she may reckon upon me." Here Rose-Pompon bridled up very prettily, and thus continued, "Do not be uneasy! It is the least one can do, when one is in a good position, to share the advantages with one's friends, who are not so well off. It would be a fine thing to keep one's happiness to one's self! to stuff it with straw, and put it under a glass, and let no one touch it! When I talk of happiness, it's only to make talk; it is true in one sense; but in another, you see, my good dear—— Bah! I am only seventeen—but no matter—I might go on talking till to-morrow, and you would not be any the wiser. So let me kiss you once more, and don't be down-hearted—nor Cephyse either, do you hear? for I shall be close at hand."

And, stooping still lower, Rose-Pompon cordially embraced

Mother Bunch. It is impossible to express what Mdlle. de Cardoville felt during this conversation, or rather during this monologue of the grisette on the subject of the attempted suicide. The eccentric jargon of Mdlle. Rose-Pompon, her liberal facility in disposing of Philemon's bazaar, to the owner of which (as she said) she was luckily not married—the goodness of her heart, which revealed itself in her offers of service—her contrasts, her impertinence, her drollery—all this was so new and inexplicable to Mdlle. de Cardoville, that she remained for some time mute and motionless with surprise. Such, then, was the creature to whom Djalma had sacrificed her!

If Adrienne's first impression at sight of Rose-Pompon had been horribly painful, reflection soon awakened doubts, which were to become shortly ineffable hopes. Remembering the interview she had overheard between Rodin and Djalma, when, concealed in the conservatory, she had wished to prove the Jesuit's fidelity, Adrienne asked herself if it was reasonable, if it was possible to believe, that the prince, whose ideas of love seemed to be so poetical, so elevated, so pure, could find any charm in the disjointed and silly chat of this young girl? Adrienne could not hesitate; she pronounced the thing impossible, from the moment she had seen her rival near, and witnessed her style both of manners and conversation, which, without detracting from the prettiness of her features, gave them a trivial and not very attractive character. Adrienne's doubts with regard to the deep love of the prince for Rose-Pompon were hence soon changed to complete incredulity. Endowed with too much sense and penetration, not to perceive that this apparent connection, so inconceivable on the part of Djalma, must conceal some mystery, Mdlle. de Cardoville felt her hopes revive. As this consoling thought arose in her mind, her heart, until now so painfully oppressed, began once more to dilate; she felt vague aspirations towards a better future; and yet, cruelly warned by the past, she feared to yield too readily to a mere illusion, for she remembered the notorious fact that the prince had really appeared in public with this girl. But now that Mdlle. de Cardoville could fully appreciate what she was, she found the conduct of the prince only the more incomprehensible. And how can we judge soundly and surely of that which is enveloped in mystery? And then a secret presentiment told her, that it would, perhaps, be beside the couch of the poor sempstress, whom she had just saved from death, that, by a providential coincidence, she

would learn the secret on which depended the happiness of her life.

The emotions which agitated the heart of Adrienne, became so violent, that her fine face was flushed with a bright red, her bosom heaved, and her large, black eyes, lately dimmed by sadness, once more shone with a mild radiance. She waited with inexpressible impatience for what was to follow. In the interview, with which Rose-Pompon had threatened her, and which a few minutes before Adrienne would have declined with all the dignity of legitimate indignation, she now hoped to find the explanation of a mystery, which it was of such importance for her to clear up. After once more tenderly embracing Mother Bunch, Rose-Pompon got up from the ground, and, turning towards Adrienne, eyed her from head to foot, with the utmost coolness, and said to her, in a somewhat impertinent tone: "It is now our turn, madame"—the word "madame" still pronounced with the accent before described—"we have a little matter to settle together."

"I am at your order," answered Adrienne, with much mildness and simplicity.

At sight of the triumphant and decisive air of Rose-Pompon, and on hearing her challenge to Mdlle. de Cardoville, the worthy Agricola, after exchanging a few words with Mother Bunch, opened his eyes and ears very wide, and remained staring in amazement at the effrontery of the grisette; then, advancing towards her, he whispered, as he plucked her by the sleeve: "I say, are you mad? Do you know to whom you speak?"

"Well! what then? Is not one pretty woman worth another! I say that for the lady. She will not eat me, I suppose," replied Rose-Pompon, aloud, and with an air of defiance. "I have to talk with madame, here. I am sure, she knows why and wherefore. If not, I will tell her; it will not take me long."

Adrienne, who feared some ridiculous exposure on the subject of Djalma, in the presence of Agricola, made a sign to the latter, and thus answered the grisette: "I am ready to hear you, miss, but not in this place. You will understand why."

"Very well, madame, I have my key. You can come to my apartments"—the last word pronounced with an air of ostentatious importance.

"Let us go then to your apartments, miss, since you do me the honor to receive me there," answered Mdlle. de Car-

doville, in her mild, sweet voice, and with a slight inclination of the head, so full of exquisite politeness, that Rose-Pompon was daunted, notwithstanding all her effrontery.

"What, lady!" said Agricola to Adrienne; "you are good enough——"

"M. Agricola," said Mdlle. de Cardoville, interrupting him, "please to remain with our poor friend: I shall soon be back."

Then, approaching Mother Bunch, who shared in Agricola's astonishment, she said to her: "Excuse me for leaving you a few seconds. Only regain a little strength, and, when I return, I will take you home with me, dear sister."

Then, turning towards Rose-Pompon, who was more and more surprised at hearing so fine a lady call the workgirl her sister, she added: "I am ready whenever you please, mademoiselle."

"Beg pardon, madame, if I go first to show you the way, but it's a regular break-neck sort of a place," answered Rose-Pompon, pressing her elbows to her sides, and screwing up her lips to prove that she was no stranger to polite manners and fine language. And the two rivals quitted the garret together, leaving Agricola alone with Mother Bunch.

Luckily, the disfigured remains of the Bacchanal Queen had been carried into Mother Arsène's subterraneous shop, so that the crowd of spectators, always attracted by any fatal event, had assembled in front of the house; and Rose-Pompon, meeting no one in the little court she had to traverse with Adrienne, continued in ignorance of the tragical death of her old friend Cephyse. In a few moments the grisette and Mdlle. de Cardoville had reached Philemon's apartment. This singular abode remained in the same state of picturesque disorder in which Rose-Pompon had left it, when Ninny Moulin came to fetch her to act the heroine of a mysterious adventure.

Adrienne, completely ignorant of the eccentric modes of life of students and their companions, could not, in spite of the thoughts which occupied her mind, forbear examining, with a mixture of surprise and curiosity, this strange and grotesque chaos, composed of the most dissimilar objects—disguises for masked balls, skulls with pipes in their mouths, odd boots standing on book-shelves, monstrous bottles, women's clothes, ends of tobacco pipes, etc., etc. To the first astonishment of Adrienne succeeded an impression of painful repugnance. The young lady felt herself uneasy

and out of place in this abode, not of poverty, but disorder; whilst, on the contrary, the sewing-girl's miserable garret had caused her no such feeling.

Rose-Pompon, notwithstanding all her airs, was considerably troubled when she found herself alone with Mdlle. de Cardoville; the rare beauty of the young patrician, her fashionable look, the elegance of her manners, the style, both dignified and affable, with which she had answered the impertinent address of the grisette, began to have their effect upon the latter, who, being moreover a good-natured girl, had been touched at hearing Mdlle. de Cardoville call the hunchback "friend and sister.' Without knowing exactly who Adrienne was, Rose-Pompon was not ignorant that she belonged to the richest and highest class of society; she felt already some remorse at having attacked her so cavalierly; and her intentions, at first very hostile with regard to Mdlle. de Cardoville, were gradually much modified. Yet, being very obstinate, and not wishing to appear to submit to an influence that offended her pride, Rose-Pompon endeavored to recover her assurance; and, having bolted the door, she said to Adrienne: "Pray do me the favor to sit down, madame"—still with the intention of showing that she was no stranger to refined manners and conversation.

Mdlle. de Cardoville was about mechanically to take a chair, when Rose-Pompon, worthy to practise those ancient virtues of hospitality, which regarded even an enemy as sacred in the person of a guest, cried out hastily: "Don't take that chair, madame; it wants a leg."

Adrienne laid her hand on another chair.

"Nor that either; the back is quite loose," again exclaimed Rose-Pompon. And she spoke the truth; for the chair-back, which was made in the form of a lyre, remained in the hands of Mdlle. de Cardoville, who said, as she replaced it discreetly in its former position: "I think, miss, that we can very well talk standing."

"As you please, madame," replied Rose-Pompon, steadying herself the more bravely the more uneasy she felt. And the interview of the lady and the grisette began in this fashion.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

THE INTERVIEW.

After a minute's hesitation, Rose-Pompon said to Adrienne, whose heart was beating violently: "I will tell you directly, madame, what I have on my mind. I should not have gone out of my way to seek you, but, as I happen to fall in with you, it is very natural I should take advantage of it."

"But, miss," said Adrienne, mildly, "may I at least know the subject of the conversation we are to have together?"

"Yes, madame," replied Rose-Pompon, affecting an air of still more decided confidence; "first of all, you must not suppose I am unhappy, or going to make a scene of jealousy, or cry like a forsaken damsel. Do not flatter yourself! Thank heaven, I have no reason to complain of Prince Charming—that is the pet name I gave him—on the contrary, he has made me very happy. If I left him, it was against his will, and because I chose."

So saying, Rose-Pompon, whose heart was swelling in spite of her fine airs, could not repress a sigh.

"Yes, madame," she resumed, "I left him because I chose—for he quite doted on me. If I had liked, he would have married me—yes, madame, married me—so much the worse, if that gives you pain. Though, when I say 'so much the worse,' it is true that I meant to pain you. To be sure I did—but then, just now when I saw you so kind to poor Mother Bunch, though I was certainly in the right, still I felt something. However, to cut matters short, it is clear that I detest you, and that you deserve it," added Rose-Pompon, stamping her foot.

From all this it resulted, even for a person much less sagacious than Adrienne, and much less interested in discovering the truth, that Rose-Pompon, notwithstanding her triumphant airs in speaking of him whom she represented as so much attached to her, and even anxious to wed her, was in reality completely disappointed, and was now taking refuge in a deliberate falsehood. It was evident that she

was not loved, and that nothing but violent jealousy had induced her to desire this interview with Mdlle. de Cardoville, in order to make what is vulgarly called a scene, considering Adrienne (the reason will be explained presently) as her successful rival. But Rose-Pompon, having recovered her good-nature, found it very difficult to continue the scene in question, particularly as, for many reasons, she felt overawed by Adrienne.

Though she had expected, if not the singular speech of the grisette, at least something of the same result—for she felt it was impossible that the prince could entertain a serious attachment for this girl—Mdlle. de Cardoville was at first delighted to hear the confirmation of her hopes from the lips of her rival; but suddenly these hopes were succeeded by a cruel apprehension, which we will endeavor to explain. What Adrienne had just heard ought to have satisfied her completely. Sure that the heart of Djalma had never ceased to belong to her, she ought, according to the customs and opinions of the world, to have cared little if, in the effervescence of an ardent youth, he had chanced to yield to some ephemeral caprice for this creature, who was, after all, very pretty and desirable—the more especially as he had now repaired his error by separating from her.

Notwithstanding these good reasons, such an error of the senses would not have been pardoned by Adrienne. She did not understand that complete separation of the body and soul that would make the one exempt from the stains of the other. She did not think it a matter of indifference to toy with one woman whilst you were thinking of another. Her young, chaste, passionate love demanded an absolute fealty—a fealty as just in the eyes of heaven and nature as it may be ridiculous and foolish in the eyes of man. For the very reason that she cherished a refined religion of the senses, and revered them as an adorable and divine manifestation, Adrienne had all sorts of delicate scruples and nice repugnances, unknown to the austere spirituality of those ascetic prudes who despise vile matter too much to take notice of its errors, and allow it to grovel in filth, to show the contempt in which they hold it. Mdlle. de Cardoville was not one of those wonderfully modest creatures who would die of confusion rather than say plainly that they wished for a young and handsome husband, at once ardent and pure. It is true that they generally marry old, ugly, and corrupted men, and make up for it by taking two or three lovers six

months after. But Adrienne felt instinctively how much of virginal and celestial freshness there is in the equal innocence of two loving and passionate beings—what guarantees for the future in the remembrance which a man preserves of his first love!

We say, then, that Adrienne was only half-satisfied, though convinced by the vexation of Rose-Pompon that Djalma had never entertained a serious attachment for the grisette.

"And why do you detest me, miss?" said Adrienne mildly, when Rose-Pompon had finished her speech.

"Oh! bless me, madame!" replied the latter, forgetting altogether her assumption of triumph, and yielding to the natural sincerity of her character; "pretend that you don't know why I detest you!—Oh, yes! people go and pick bouquets from the jaws of a panther for people that they care nothing about, don't they? And if it was only that!" added Rose-Pompon, who was gradually getting animated, and whose pretty face, at first contracted into a sullen pout, now assumed an expression of real and yet half-comic sorrow.

"And if it was only the nosegay!" resumed she. "Though it gave me a dreadful turn to see Prince Charming leap like a kid upon the stage, I might have said to myself: 'Pooh! these Indians have their own way of showing politeness. Here, a lady drops her nosegay, and a gentleman picks it up and gives it to her; but in India it is quite another thing; the man picks up the nosegay, and does not return it to the woman—he only kills a panther before her eyes.' Those are good manners in that country, I suppose; but what cannot be good manners anywhere is to treat a woman as I have been treated. And all thanks to you, madame!"

These complaints of Rose-Pompon, at once bitter and laughable, did not at all agree with what she had previously stated as to Djalma's passionate love for her; but Adrienne took care not to point out this contradiction, and said to her, mildly: "You must be mistaken, miss, when you suppose that I had anything to do with your troubles. But, in any case, I regret sincerely that you should have been ill-treated by any one."

"If you think I have been beaten, you are quite wrong," exclaimed Rose-Pompon. "Ah! well, I am sure! No, it is not that. But I am certain that, had it not been for you, Prince Charming would have got to love me a little. I am

worthy the trouble, after all—and then there are different sorts of love—I am not so very particular—not even so much as that," added Rose-Pompon, snapping her fingers.

"Ah!" she continued, "when Ninny Moulin came to fetch me, and brought me jewels and laces to persuade me to go with him, he was quite right in saying there was no harm in his offers."

"Ninny Moulin?" asked Mdlle. de Cardoville, becoming more and more interested; "who is this Ninny Moulin, miss?"

"A religious writer," answered Rose-Pompon, pouting; "the right-hand man of a lot of old sacristans, whose money he takes on pretence of writing about morality and religion. A fine morality it is!"

At these words—"a religious writer"—"sacristans" Adrienne instantly divined some new plot of Rodin or Father d'Aigrigny, of which she and Djalma were to have been the victims. She began vaguely to perceive the real state of the case, as she resumed: "But, miss, under what pretence could this man take you away with him?"

"He came to fetch me, and said I need not fear for my virtue, and was only to make myself look pretty. So I said to myself: 'Philemon's out of town, and it's very dull here all alone. This seems a droll affair; what can I risk by it?'—Alas! I didn't know what I risked," added Rose-Pompon, with a sigh. "Well! Ninny Moulin takes me away in a fine carriage. We stop in the Place du Palais-Royal. A sullen-looking man, with a yellow face, gets up in the room of Ninny Moulin, and takes me to the house of Prince Charming. When I saw him—la! he was so handsome, so very handsome, that I was quite dizzy-like; and he had such a kind, noble air, that I said to myself, 'Well! there will be some credit if I remain a good girl now!'—I did not know what a true word I was speaking. I have been good—oh! worse than good."

"What, miss! do you regret having been so virtuous?"

"Why, you see, I regret, at least, that I have not had the pleasure of refusing. But how can you refuse, when nothing is asked—when you are not even thought worth one little loving word?"

"But, miss, allow me to observe to you that the indifference of which you complain does not seem to have prevented your making a long stay in the house in question."

"How should I know why the prince kept me there, or took me out riding with him, or to the play? Perhaps it is

the fashion in his savage country to have a pretty girl by your side, and to pay no attention to her at all!"

"But why, then, did you remain, miss?"

"Why did I remain?" said Rose-Pompon, stamping her foot with vexation. "I remained because, without knowing how it happened, I began to get very fond of Prince Charming; and what is queer enough, I, who am as gay as a lark, loved him because he was so sorrowful, which shows that it was a serious matter. At last, one day, I could hold out no longer. I said: 'Never mind; I don't care for the consequences. Philemon, I am sure, is having his fun in the country.' That set my mind at ease. So one morning, I dress myself in my best, all very pretty, look in my glass, and say: "Well, that will do—he can't stand that!" and, going to his room, I tell him all that passes through my head; I laugh, I cry—at last I tell him that I adore him. What do you think he answers, in his mild voice, and as cold as a piece of marble? Why, 'Poor child—poor child—poor child!'" added Rose-Pompon, with indignation; "neither more nor less than if I had come to complain to him of the toothache. But the worst of it is that I am sure, if he were not in love elsewhere, he would be all fire and gunpowder. Only now he is so sad, so dejected!"

Then, pausing a moment, Rose-Pompon added: "No, I will not tell you that; you would be too pleased." But, after another pause, she continued: "Well, never mind; I will tell you, though;" and this singular girl looked at Mlle. de Cardoville with a mixture of sympathy and deference. "Why should I keep it from you? I began by riding the high horse, and saying that the prince wished to marry me; and I finish by confessing that he almost turned me out. Well, it's not my fault; when I try to fib, I am sure to get confused. So, madame, this is the plain truth:—When I met you at poor Mother Bunch's, I was at first as angry as a little turkey-cock; but when I heard you, that are such a fine great lady, speak so kindly to the poor girl, and treat her as your sister, do what I would, my anger began to go away. Since we have been here, I have done my utmost to get it up again; but I find it impossible, and the more I see the difference between us, the more I perceive that Prince Charming was right in thinking so much of you. For you must know, madame, that he is over head and ears in love with you. I don't say so merely because he killed the panther for you at the Porte-Saint-Martin; but if you knew all the tricks he played with your bouquet,

and how he will sit up all night weeping in that room where he saw you for the first time—and then your portrait, that he has drawn upon glass, after the fashion of his country, and so many other things—the fact is, that I, who was fond of him, and saw all this, was at first in a great rage; but afterwards it was so touching that it brought the tears into my eyes. Yes, madame, just as it does now, when I merely think of the poor prince. Oh, madame!" added Rose-Pompon, her eyes swimming in tears, and with such an expression of sincere interest, that Adrienne was much moved by it; "oh, madame, you look so mild and good, that you will not make this poor prince miserable. Pray love him a little bit; what can it matter to you?"

So saying, Rose-Pompon, with a perfectly simple, though too familiar, gesture, took hold of Adrienne's hand, as if to enforce her request. It had required great self-command in Mdlle. de Cardoville to repress the rush of joy that was mounting from her heart to her lips, to check the torrent of questions which she burned to address to Rose-Pompon, and to restrain the sweet tears of happiness that for some seconds had trembled in her eyes; and, strangely enough, when Rose-Pompon took her hand, Adrienne, instead of withdrawing it, pressed the offered hand almost affectionately, and led her towards the window, as if to examine her sweet face more attentively.

On entering the room, the grisette had thrown her bonnet and shawl down upon the bed, so that Adrienne could admire the thick and silky masses of light hair that crowned the fresh face of the charming girl, with its firm, rosy cheeks, its mouth as red as a cherry, and its large blue laughing eyes; and, thanks to the somewhat scanty dress of Rose-Pompon, Adrienne could fully appreciate the various graces of her nymph-like figure. Strange as it may appear, Adrienne was delighted at finding the girl still prettier than she had at first imagined. The stoical indifference of Djalma to so attractive a creature was the best proof of the sincerity of the passion by which he was actuated.

Having taken the hand of Adrienne, Rose-Pompon was herself confused and surprised at the kindness with which Mdlle. de Cardoville permitted this familiarity. Emboldened by this indulgence, and by the silence of Adrienne, who for some moments had been contemplating her with almost grateful benevolence, the grisette resumed: "Oh, you will not refuse, madame? You will take pity on this poor prince?"

We cannot tell how Adrienne would have answered this indiscreet question of Rose-Pompon, for suddenly a loud, wild, shrill, piercing sound, evidently intended to imitate the crowing of a cock, was heard close to the door of the room.

Adrienne started in alarm; but the countenance of Rose-Pompon, just now so sad, brightened up joyously at this signal, and, clapping her hands she exclaimed, "It is Philemon!"

"What—who?" said Adrienne, hastily.

"My lover; oh, the monster! he must have come upstairs on tiptoe, to take me by surprise with his crowing. Just like him!"

A second cock-a-doodle-doo, still louder than the first, was heard close to the door. "What a stupid, droll creature it is! Always the same joke, and yet it always amuses me," said Rose-Pompon.

And drying her tears with the back of her hand, she began to laugh like one bewitched at Philemon's jest, which, though well known to her, always seemed new and agreeable.

"Do not open the door," whispered Adrienne, much embarrassed; "do not answer, I beg of you."

"Though the door is bolted, the key is on the outside; Philemon can see that there is some one at home."

"No matter—do not let him in."

"But, madame, he lives here; the room belongs to him."

In fact, Philemon, probably growing tired of the little effect produced by his two ornithological imitations, turned the key in the lock, and finding himself unable to open the door, said in a deep bass voice: "What, dearest puss, have you shut yourself in? Are you praying Saint-Flambard for the return of Philly?" (short for Philemon.)

Adrienne, not wishing to increase, by prolonging it, the awkwardness of this ridiculous situation, went straight to the door and opened it, to the great surprise of Philemon, who recoiled two or three steps. Notwithstanding the annoyance of this incident, Mdlle. de Cardoville could not help smiling at sight of Rose-Pompon's lover, and of the articles he carried in his hand or under his arm.

Philemon was a tall fellow, with dark hair and a very fresh color, and, being just arrived from a journey, he wore a white cap; his thick, black beard flowed down on his sky-blue waistcoat; and a short olive-colored velvet shooting-coat, with extravagantly large plaid trousers, completed his costume. As for the accessories which had provoked a smile

from Adrienne, they consisted: first, of a portmanteau tucked under his arm, with the head and neck of a goose protruding from it; secondly, of a cage held in his hand, with an enormous white rabbit all alive within it.

"Oh! the darling white rabbit! what pretty red eyes!" Such, it must be confessed, was the first exclamation of Rose-Pompon, though Philemon, to whom it was not addressed, had returned after a long absence; but the student, far from being shocked at seeing himself thus sacrificed to his long-eared companion, smiled complacently, rejoicing at the success of his attempt to please his mistress.

All this passed very rapidly. While Rose-Pompon, kneeling before the cage, was still occupied with her admiration of the rabbit, Philemon, struck with the lofty air of Mdlle. de Cardoville, raised his hand to his cap, and bowed respectfully as he made way for her to pass. Adrienne returned his salutation with politeness, full of grace and dignity, and, lightly descending the stairs, soon disappeared. Dazzled by her beauty, as well as impressed with her noble and lofty bearing, and curious to know how in the world Rose-Pompon had fallen in with such an acquaintance, Philemon said to her, in his amorous jargon: "Dearest puss! tell her Philly who is that fine lady?"

"One of my school-fellows, you great satyr!" said Rose-Pompon, still playing with the rabbit.

Then, glancing at a box, which Philemon deposited close to the cage and the portmanteau, she added: "I'll wager anything you have brought me some more preserves!"

"Philly has brought something better to his dear puss," said the student, imprinting two vigorous kisses on the rosy cheeks of Rose-Pompon, who had at length consented to stand up; "Philly has brought her his heart."

"Fudge!" said the grisette, delicately placing the thumb of her left hand on the tip of her nose, and opening the fingers, which she slightly moved to and fro. Philemon answered this provocation by putting his arm around her waist; and then the happy pair shut their door.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

SOOTHING WORDS.

During the interview of Adrienne with Rose-Pompon a touching scene took place between Agricola and Mother Bunch, who had been much surprised at Mdlle. de Cardoville's condescension with regard to the grisette. Immediately after the departure of Adrienne, Agricola had knelt down beside Mother Bunch, and said to her, with profound emotion: "We are alone, and I can at length tell you what weighs upon my heart. This act is too cruel—to die of misery and despair, and not to send to me for assistance!"

"Listen to me, Agricola——"

"No, there is no excuse for this. What! we called each other by the names of brother and sister, and for fifteen years gave every proof of sincere affection—and, when the day of misfortune comes, you quit life without caring for those you must leave behind—without considering that to kill yourself is to tell them they are indifferent to you!"

"Forgive me, Agricola! it is true. I had never thought of that," said the workgirl, casting down her eyes; "but poverty—want of work——"

"Misery! want of work! and was I not here?"

"And despair!"

"But why despair? This generous young lady had received you in her house; she knew your worth, and treated you as her friend—and just at the moment when you had every chance of happiness, you leave the house abruptly, and we remain in the most horrible anxiety on your account."

"I feared—to be—to be a burden to my benefactress," stammered she.

"You a burden to Mdlle. de Cardoville, that is so rich and good!"

"I feared to be indiscreet," said the sewing-girl, more and more embarrassed.

Instead of answering his adopted sister, Agricola remained silent, and contemplated her for some moments with an undefinable expression; then he exclaimed suddenly, as if replying to a question put by himself: "She will forgive me for disobeying her.—I am sure of it."

He next turned towards Mother Bunch, who was looking at him in astonishment, and said to her in a voice of emotion: "I am too frank to keep up this deception. I am reproaching you—blaming you—and my thoughts are quite different."

"How so, Agricola?"

"My heart aches, when I think of the evil I have done you."

"I do not understand you, my friend; you have never done me any evil."

"What! never? even in little things? when, for instance, yielding to a detestable habit, I, who loved and respected you as my sister, insulted you a hundred times a day?"

"Insulted me!"

"Yes—when I gave you an odious and ridiculous nickname, instead of calling you properly."

At these words, Mother Bunch looked at the smith in the utmost alarm, trembling lest he had discovered her painful secret, notwithstanding the assurance she had received from Mdlle. de Cardoville. Yet she calmed herself a little when she reflected, that Agricola might of himself have thought of the humiliation inflicted on her by calling her Mother Bunch, and she answered him with a forced smile: "Can you be grieved at so small a thing? It was a habit, Agricola, from childhood. When did your good and affectionate mother, who nevertheless loved me as her daughter, ever call me anything else?"

"And did my mother consult you about my marriage, speak to you of the rare beauty of my bride, beg you to come and see her, and study her character, in the hope that the instinct of your affection for me would warn you—if I made a bad choice? Did my mother have this cruelty?—No; it was I, who thus pierced your heart!"

The fears of the hearer were again aroused; there could be but little doubt that Agricola knew her secret. She felt herself sinking with confusion; yet, making a last effort not to believe the discovery, she murmured in a feeble voice: "True, Agricola! It was not your mother, but yourself, who made me that request—and I was grateful to you for such a mark of confidence."

"Grateful, my poor girl!" cried the smith, whilst his eyes filled with tears; "no, it is not true. I pained you fearfully—I was merciless—heaven knows, without being aware of it!"

"But," said the other, in a voice now almost unintelligible, "what makes you think so?"

"Your love for me!" cried the smith, trembling with emotion, as he clasped Mother Bunch in a brotherly embrace.

"Oh heaven!" murmured the unfortunate creature, as she covered her face with her hands, "he knows all."

"Yes, I know all," resumed Agricola, with an expression of ineffable tenderness and respect: "yes, I know all, and I will not have you blush for a sentiment, which honors me, and of which I feel so justly proud. Yes, I know all; and I say to myself with joy and pride, that the best, the most noble heart in the world is mine—will be mine always. Come, Magdalen; let us leave shame to evil passions. Raise your eyes, and look at me! You know, if my countenance was ever false—if it ever reflected a feigned emotion. Then look and tell me, if you cannot read in my features, how proud I am, Magdalen, how justly proud of your love!"

Overwhelmed with grief and confusion, Mother Bunch had not dared to look on Agricola; but his words expressed so deep a conviction, the tones of his voice revealed so tender an emotion, that the poor creature felt her shame gradually diminish, particularly when Agricola added, with rising animation: "Be satisfied, my sweet, my noble Magdalen; I will be worthy of this love. Believe me, it shall yet cause you as much happiness as it has occasioned tears. Why should this love be a motive for estrangement, confusion, fear? For what is love, in the sense in which it is held by your generous heart? Is it not a continual exchange of devotion, tenderness, esteem, of mutual and blind confidence? —Why, Magdalen! we may have all this for one another—devotion, tenderness, confidence—even more than in times past; for, on a thousand occasions, your secret inspired you with fear and suspicion—while, for the future, on the contrary, you will see me take such delight in the place I fill in your good and valiant heart, that you will be happy in the happiness you bestow. What I have just said may seem very selfish and conceited; so much the worse! I do not know how to lie."

The longer the smith spoke, the less troubled became Mother Bunch. What she had above all feared in the discovery of her secret was to see it received with raillery, contempt, or humiliating compassion; far from this, joy and happiness were distinctly visible on the manly and honest face of Agricola. The hunchback knew him incapable of

deception; therefore she exclaimed, this time without shame or confusion, but rather with a sort of pride,

"Every sincere and pure passion is so far good and consoling as to end by deserving interest and sympathy, when it has triumphed over its first excess! It is alike honorable to the heart which feels and that which inspires it!—Thanks to you, Agricola—thanks to the kind words, which have raised me in my own esteem—I feel that, instead of blushing, I ought to be proud of this love. My benefactress is right—you are right: why should I be ashamed of it? Is it not a true and sacred love? To be near you, to love you, to tell you so, to prove it by constant devotion, what did I ever desire more? And yet shame and fear, joined with that dizziness of the brain which extreme misery produces, drove me to suicide!—But then some allowance must be made for the suspicions of a poor creature, who has been the subject of ridicule from her cradle. So my secret was to die with me, unless some unforeseen accident should reveal it to you; and, in that case, you are right—sure of myself, sure of you, I ought to have feared nothing. But I may claim some indulgence; mistrust, cruel mistrust of one's self, makes one doubt others also. Let us forget all that. Agricola, my generous brother, I will say to you, as you said to me just now, 'Look at me; you know my countenance cannot lie. Look at me: see if I shun your gaze; see if, ever in my life, I looked so happy'—and yet, even now, I was about to die!"

She spoke the truth. Agricola himself could not have hoped so prompt an effect from his words. In spite of the deep traces which misery, grief, and sickness had imprinted on the girl's features, they now shone with radiant happiness and serenity, whilst her blue eyes, gentle and pure as her soul, were fixed, without embarrassment, on those of Agricola.

"Oh! thanks, thanks!" cried the smith, in a rapture of delight: "when I see you so calm, and so happy, Magdalen, I am indeed grateful."

"Yes, I am calm, I am happy," replied she; "and happy I shall be, for I can now tell you my most secret thoughts. Yes, happy; for this day, which began so fatally, ends like a divine dream. Far from being afraid, I now look at you with hope and joy. I have again found my generous benefactress, and I am tranquil as to the fate of my poor sister. Oh! shall we not soon see her? I should like her to take part in this happiness."

She seemed so happy, that the smith did not dare to inform her of the death of Cephyse, and reserved himself to communicate the same at a more fitting opportunity. Therefore he answered: "Cephyse, being the stronger, has been the more shaken; it will not be prudent, I am told, to see her to-day."

"I will wait then. I can repress my impatience, I have so much to say to you."

"Dear, gentle Magdalen!"

"Oh, my friend!" cried the girl, interrupting Agricola, with tears of joy: "I cannot tell you what I feel, when I hear you call me Magdalen. It is so sweet, so soothing, that my heart expands with delight."

"Poor girl! how dreadfully she must have suffered!" cried the smith, with inexpressible emotion, "when she displays so much happiness, so much gratitude, at being called by her own poor name!"

"But consider, my friend; that word in your mouth contains a new life for me. If you only knew what hopes, what pleasures I can now see gleaming in the future! If you knew all the cherished longings of my tenderness!—Your wife, the charming Angela, with her angel face and angel-soul—oh! in my turn, I can say to you, 'Look at me, and see how sweet that name is to my lips and heart!' Yes, your charming, your good Angela will call me Magdalen—and your children, Agricola, your children!—dear little creatures!—to them also I shall be Magdalen—their good Magdalen—and the love I shall bear them will make them mine, as well as their mother's—and I shall have my part in every maternal care—and they will belong to us three; will they not, Agricola?—Oh! let me, let me weep! These tears without bitterness do me so much good; they are tears that need not be concealed. Thank heaven! thank you, my friend! those other tears are I trust dried forever."

For some seconds, this affecting scene had been overlooked by an invisible witness. The smith and Mother Bunch had not perceived Mdlle. de Cardoville standing on the threshold of the door. As Mother Bunch had said, this day, which dawned with all under such fatal auspices, had become for all a day of ineffable felicity. Adrienne, too, was full of joy, for Djalma had been faithful to her, Djalma loved her with passion. The odious appearances, of which she had been the dupe and victim, evidently formed part of a new plot of Rodin, and it only remained for Mdlle. de Cardoville to discover the end of these machinations.

Another joy was reserved for her. The happy are quick in detecting happiness in others, and Adrienne guessed, by the hunchback's last words, that there was no longer any secret between the smith and the sempstress. She could not therefore help exclaiming, as she entered: "Oh! this will be the brightest day of my life, for I shall not be happy alone!"

Agricola and Mother Bunch turned round hastily. "Lady," said the smith, "in spite of the promise I made you, I could not conceal from Magdalen that I knew she loved me!"

"Now that I no longer blush for this love before Agricola, why should I blush for it before you, lady, that told me to be proud of it, because it is noble and pure?" said Mother Bunch, to whom her happiness gave strength enough to rise, and to lean upon Agricola's arm.

"It is well, my friend," said Adrienne, as she threw her arms round her to support her; "only one word, to excuse the indiscretion with which you will perhaps reproach me. If I told your secret to M. Agricola——"

"Do you know why it was, Magdalen?" cried the smith, interrupting Adrienne. "It was only another proof of the lady's delicate generosity. 'I long hesitated to confide to you this secret,' said she to me this morning, 'but I have at length made up my mind to it. We shall probably find your adopted sister; you have been to her the best of brothers: but many times, without knowing it, you have wounded her feelings cruelly—and now that you know her secret, I trust in your kind heart to keep it faithfully, and so spare the poor child a thousand pangs—pangs the more bitter, because they come from you, and are suffered in silence. Hence, when you speak to her of your wife, your domestic happiness, take care not to gall that noble and tender heart.' —Yes, Magdalen, these were the reasons that led the lady to commit what she called an indiscretion."

"I want words to thank you now and ever," said Mother Bunch.

"See, my friend," replied Adrienne, "how often the designs of the wicked turn against themselves. They feared your devotion to me, and therefore employed that unhappy Florine to steal your journal——"

"So as to drive me from your house with shame, lady, when I supposed my most secret thoughts an object of ridicule to all. There can be no doubt such was their plan," said Mother Bunch.

"None, my child. Well! this horrible wickedness, which

nearly caused your death, now turns to the confusion of the criminals. Their plot is discovered—and, luckily, many other of their designs," said Adrienne, as she thought of Rose-Pompon.

Then she resumed, with heartfelt joy: "At last, we are again united, happier than ever, and in our very happiness we shall find new resources to combat our enemies. I say *our* enemies—for all that love me are odious to these wretches. But courage, the hour is come, and the good people will have their turn."

"Thank heaven, lady," said the smith; "for my part, I shall not be wanting in zeal. What delight to strip them of their mask!"

"Let me remind you, M. Baudoin, that you have an appointment for to-morrow with M. Hardy."

"I have not forgotten it, lady, any more than the generous offers I am to convey to him."

"That is nothing. He belongs to my family. Tell him (what indeed I shall write to him this evening), that the funds necessary to reopen his factory are at his disposal; I do not say so for his sake only, but for that of a hundred families reduced to want. Beg him to quit immediately the fatal abode to which they have taken him: for a thousand reasons he should be on his guard against all that surround him."

"Be satisfied, lady. The letter he wrote to me in reply to the one I got secretly delivered to him, was short, affectionate, sad—but he grants me the interview I had asked for, and I am sure I shall be able to persuade him to leave that melancholy dwelling, and perhaps to depart with me, he has always had so much confidence in my attachment."

"Well, M. Baudoin, courage!" said Adrienne, as she threw her cloak over the workgirl's shoulders, and wrapped her round with care. "Let us be gone, for it is late. As soon as we get home, I will give you a letter for M. Hardy, and to-morrow you will come and tell me the result of your visit. No, not to-morrow," she added, blushing slightly. "Write to me to-morrow, and the day after, about twelve, come to me."

* * * * * * *

Some minutes later, the young sempstress, supported by Agricola and Adrienne, had descended the stairs of that gloomy house, and, being placed in the carriage by the side of Mdlle. de Cardoville, she earnestly entreated to be allowed

to see Cephyse; it was in vain that Agricola assured her it was impossible, and that she should see her the next day. Thanks to the information derived from Rose-Pompon, Mdlle. de Cardoville was reasonably suspicious of all those who surrounded Djalma, and she therefore took measures, that very evening, to have a letter delivered to the prince by what she considered a sure hand.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

THE TWO CARRIAGES.

It is the evening of the day on which Mdlle. de Cardoville prevented the sewing-girl's suicide. It strikes eleven; the night is dark; the wind blows with violence, and drives along great black clouds, which completely hide the pale lustre of the moon. A hackney-coach, drawn by two broken-winded horses, ascends slowly and with difficulty the slope of the Rue Blanche, which is pretty steep near the barrier, in the part where is situated the house occupied by Djalma.

The coach stops. The coachman, cursing the length of an interminable drive "within the circuit," leading at last to this difficult ascent, turns round on his box, leans over towards the front window of the vehicle, and says in a gruff tone to the person he is driving: "Come! are we almost there? From the Rue de Vaugirard to the Barrière Blanche, is a pretty good stretch, I think, without reckoning that the night is so dark, that one can hardly see two steps before one—and the street-lamps not lighted because of the moon, which doesn't shine, after all!"

"Look out for a little door with a portico—drive on about twenty yards beyond—and then stop close to the wall," answered a squeaking voice, impatiently, and with an Italian accent.

"Here is a beggarly Dutchman, that will make me as savage as a bear?" muttered the angry Jehu to himself. Then he added: "Thousand thunders! I tell you that I can't see. How the devil can I find out your little door?"

"Have you no sense? Follow the wall to the right, brush against it, and you will easily find the little door. It is next to No. 50. If you do not find it, you must be drunk," answered the Italian, with increased bitterness.

The coachman only replied by swearing like a trooper, and whipping up his jaded horses. Then, keeping close to

the wall, he strained his eyes in trying to read the numbers of the houses, by the aid of his carriage-lamps.

After some moments, the coach again stopped. "I have passed No. 50, and here is a little door with a portico," said the coachman. "Is that the one?"

"Yes," said the voice. "Now go forward some twenty yards, and then stop."

"Well! I never——"

"Then get down from your box, and give twice three knocks at the little door we have just passed—you understand me?—twice three knocks."

"Is that all you give me to drink?" cried the exasperated coachman.

"When you have taken me back to the Faubourg Saint-Germain, where I live, you shall have something handsome, if you do but manage matters well."

"Ha! now the Faubourg Saint-Germain! Only that little bit of distance!" said the driver, with repressed rage. "And I who have winded my horses, wanted to be on the boulevard by the time the play was out. Well, I'm blowed!" Then, putting a good face on his bad luck, and consoling himself with the thought of the promised drink-money, he resumed: "I am to give twice three knocks at the little door?"

"Yes; three knocks first—then a pause—then three other knocks. Do you understand?"

"What next?"

"Tell the person who comes, that he is waited for, and bring him here to the coach."

"The devil burn you!" said the coachman to himself, as he turned round on the box, and whipped up his horses, adding: "this crusty old Dutchman has something to do with Freemasons, or, perhaps, smugglers, seeing we are so near the gates. He deserves my giving him in charge, for bringing me all the way from the Rue de Vaugirard."

At twenty steps beyond the little door, the coach again stopped, and the coachman descended from the box to execute the orders he had received. Going to the little door, he knocked three times; then paused, as he had been desired, and then knocked three times more. The clouds, which had hitherto been so thick as entirely to conceal the disk of the moon, just then withdrew sufficiently to afford a glimmering light, so that when the door opened at the signal, the coachman saw a middle-sized person issue from it, wrapped in a cloak, and wearing a colored cap.

This man carefully locked the door, and then advanced two steps into the street. "They are waiting for you," said the coachman; "I am to take you along with me to the coach."

Preceding the man with the cloak, who only answered him by a nod, he led him to the coach-door, which he was about to open, and to let down the step, when the voice exclaimed from the inside: "It is not necessary. The gentleman may talk to me through the window. I will call you when it is time to start."

"Which means that I shall be kept here long enough to send you to all the devils!" murmured the driver. "However, I may as well walk about, just to stretch my legs."

So saying, he began to walk up and down, by the side of the wall in which was the little door. Presently, he heard the distant sound of wheels, which soon came nearer and nearer, and a carriage, rapidly ascending the slope, stopped on the other side of the little garden-door.

"Come, I say! a private carriage!" said the coachman. "Good horses those, to come up the Rue Blanche at a trot."

The coachman was just making this observation, when, by favor of a momentary gleam of light, he saw a man step from the carriage, advance rapidly to the little door, open it, and go in, closing it after him.

"It gets thicker and thicker!" said the coachman. "One comes out, and the other goes in."

So saying, he walked up to the carriage. It was splendidly harnessed, and drawn by two handsome and vigorous horses. The driver sat motionless, in his great box-coat, with the handle of his whip resting on his right knee.

"Here's weather to drive about in, with such tidy dukes as yours, comrade!" said the humble hackney-coachman to this automaton, who remained mute and impassible, without even appearing to know that he was spoken to.

"He doesn't understand French—he's an Englishman. One could tell that by his horses," said the coachman, putting this interpretation on the silence of his brother whip. Then, perceiving a tall footman at a little distance, dressed in a long gray livery coat, with blue collar and silver buttons, the coachman addressed himself to him, by way of compensation, but without much varying his phrase: "Here's nice weather to stand about in, comrade!" On the part of the footman, he was met with the same imperturbable silence.

"They're both Englishmen," resumed the coachman, philosophically; and, though somewhat astonished at the inci-

dent of the little door, he recommenced his walk in the direction of his own vehicle.

While these facts were passing, the man in the cloak, and the man with the Italian accent continued their conversation, the one still in the coach, and the other leaning with his hand on the door. It had already lasted for some time, and was carried on in Italian. They were evidently talking of some absent person, as will appear from the following.

"So," said the voice from the coach, "that is agreed to?"

"Yes, my lord," answered the man in the cloak; "but only in case the eagle should become a serpent."

"And, in the contrary event, you will receive the other half of the ivory crucifix I gave you."

"I shall know what it means, my lord."

"Continue to merit and preserve his confidence."

"I will merit and preserve it, my lord, because I admire and respect this man, who is stronger than the strongest, by craft, and courage, and will. I have knelt before him with humility, as I would kneel before one of the three black idols that stand between Bowanee and her worshippers; for his religion, like mine, teaches to change life into nothingness."

"Humph!" said the voice, in a tone of some embarrassment; "these comparisons are useless and inaccurate. Only think of obeying him, without explaining your obedience."

"Let him speak, and I perform his will! I am in his hands like a corpse, as he himself expresses it. He has seen, he sees every day, my devotion to his interests with regard to Prince Djalma. He has only to say: 'Kill him!'—and this son of a king——"

"For heaven's sake, do not have such ideas!" cried the voice, interrupting the man in the cloak. "Thank heaven, you will never be asked for such proofs of your submission."

"What I am ordered, I do. Bowanee sees me."

"I do not doubt your zeal. I know that you are a loving and intelligent barrier, placed between the prince and many guilty interests; and it is because I have heard of that zeal, of your skill in circumventing this young Indian, and, above all, of the motives of your blind devotion, that I have wished to inform you of everything. You are the fanatical worshipper of him you serve. That is well; man should be the obedient slave of the god he chooses for himself."

"Yes, my lord; so long as the god remains a god."

"We understand each other perfectly. As for your recompense, you know what I have promised."

"My lord, I have my reward already."

"How so?"

"I know what I know."

"Very well. Then as for secrecy——"

"You have securities, my lord."

"Yes—and sufficient ones."

"The interest of the cause I serve, my lord, would alone be enough to secure my zeal and discretion."

"True; you are a man of firm and ardent convictions."

"I strive to be so, my lord."

"And, after all, a very religious man in your way. It is very praiseworthy, in these irreligious times, to have any views at all on such matters—particularly when those views will just enable me to count upon your aid."

"You may count upon it, my lord, for the same reason that the intrepid hunter prefers a jackal to ten foxes, a tiger to ten jackals, a lion to ten tigers, and the welmiss to ten lions."

"What is the welmiss?"

"It is what spirit is to matter, the blade to the scabbard, the perfume to the flower, the head to the body."

"I understand. There never was a more just comparison. You are a man of sound judgment. Always recollect what you have just told me, and make yourself more and more worthy of the confidence of—your idol."

"Will he soon be in a state to hear me, my lord?"

"In two or three days, at most. Yesterday a providential crisis saved his life; and he is endowed with so energetic a will, that his cure will be very rapid."

"Shall you see him again to-morrow, my lord?"

"Yes, before my departure, to bid him farewell."

"Then tell him a strange circumstance, of which I have not been able to inform him, but which happened yesterday."

"What was it?"

"I had gone to the garden of the dead. I saw funerals everywhere, and lighted torches, in the midst of the black night, shining upon tombs. Bowanee smiled in her ebon sky. As I thought of that divinity of destruction, I beheld with joy the dead-cart emptied of its coffins. The immense pit yawned like the mouth of hell; corpses were heaped upon corpses, and still it yawned the same. Suddenly, by the light of a torch, I saw an old man beside me. He wept. I had seen him before. He is a Jew—the keeper of the house in the Rue Saint-François—you know what I mean." Here the man in the cloak started.

"Yes, I know; but what is the matter? why do you stop short?"

"Because in that house there has been for a hundred and fifty years the portrait of a man whom I once met in the centre of India, on the banks of the Ganges." And the man in the cloak again paused and shuddered.

"A singular resemblance, no doubt."

"Yes, my lord, a singular resemblance—nothing more."

"But the Jew—the old Jew?"

"I am coming to that, my lord. Still weeping, he said to a gravedigger, 'Well! and the coffin?' 'You were right,' answered the man; 'I found it in the second row of the other grave. It had the figure of a cross on it, formed by seven black nails. But how could you know the place and the mark?' 'Alas! it is no matter,' replied the old Jew, with bitter melancholy. 'You see that I was but too well informed on the subject. But where is the coffin?' 'Behind the great tomb of black marble; I have hidden it there. So make haste; for, in the confusion, nothing will be noticed. You have paid me well, and I wish you to succeed in what you require.'"

"And what did the old Jew do with the coffin marked with the seven black nails?"

"Two men accompanied him, my lord, bearing a covered litter, with curtains drawn round it. He lighted a lantern, and, followed by these two men, went towards the place pointed out by the gravedigger. A stoppage, occasioned by the dead-carts, made me lose sight of the old Jew, whom I was following amongst the tombs. Afterwards I was unable to find him."

"It is indeed a strange affair. What could this old Jew want with the coffin?"

"It is said, my lord, that they use dead bodies in preparing their magic charms."

"Those unbelievers are capable of anything—even of holding communication with the Enemy of mankind. However, we will look after this: the discovery may be of importance."

At this instant a clock struck twelve in the distance.

"Midnight! already?"

"Yes, my lord."

"I must be gone. Good-bye—but for the last time swear to me that, should matters so turn out, as soon as you receive the other half of the ivory crucifix I have just given you, you will keep your promise."

"I have sworn it by Bowanee, my lord."

"Do not forget that, to make all sure, the person who will deliver to you the other half of the crucifix is to say—come, what is he to say?"

"He is to say, my lord: 'There is many a slip 'twixt the cup and the lip.'"

"Very well. Adieu! secrecy and fidelity!"

"Secrecy and fidelity, my lord," answered the man in the cloak.

Some seconds after the hackney-coach started, carrying with it Cardinal Malipieri, one of the speakers in the above dialogue. The other, whom the reader has no doubt recognized as Faringhea, returned to the little garden-door of the house occupied by Djalma. At the moment he was putting the key into the lock, the door opened, to his great astonishment, and a man came forth. Faringhea rushed upon the unknown, seized him violently by the collar, and exclaimed: "Who are you? whence came you?"

The stranger evidently found the tone of this question anything but satisfactory; for, instead of answering, he struggled to disengage himself from Faringhea's hold, and cried out, in a loud voice: "Help! Peter!"

Instantly the carriage, which had been standing a few yards off, dashed up at full speed, and Peter, the tall footman, seizing the half-breed by the shoulders, flung him back several paces, and thus made a seasonable diversion in favor of the unknown.

"Now, sir," said the latter to Faringhea, shaking himself, and still protected by the gigantic footman, "I am in a state to answer your questions, though you certainly have a very rough way of receiving an old acquaintance. I am Dupont, ex-bailiff of the estate of Cardoville, and it was I who helped to fish you out of the water, when the ship was wrecked in which you had embarked."

By the light of the carriage-lamps, indeed, the half-caste recognized the good, honest face of Dupont, formerly bailiff, and now house-steward, to Mdlle. de Cardoville. It must not be forgotten that Dupont had been the first to write to Mdlle. de Cardoville, to ask her to interest herself for Djalma, who was then detained at Cardoville Castle by the injuries he had received during the shipwreck.

"But, sir, what is your business here? Why do you introduce yourself clandestinely into this house?" said Faringhea, in an abrupt and suspicious tone.

"I will just observe to you that there is nothing clandes-

tine in the matter. I came here in a carriage, with servants in the livery of my excellent mistress, Mdlle de Cardoville, charged by her, without any disguise or mystery, to deliver a letter to Prince Djalma, her cousin," replied Dupont, with dignity.

On these words, Faringhea trembled with mute rage, as he answered: "And why, sir, come at this late hour, and introduce yourself by this little door?"

"I came at this hour, my dear sir, because such was Mdlle. de Cardoville's command, and I entered by this little gate because there is every reason to believe that if I had gone around to the other I should not have been permitted to see the prince."

"You are mistaken, sir," replied the half-caste.

"It is possible: but as we knew that the prince usually passed a good portion of the night in the little saloon, which communicates with the greenhouse, and as Mdlle. de Cardoville had kept a duplicate key of this door, I was pretty certain, by taking this course, to be able to deliver into the prince's own hands the letter from Mdlle. de Cardoville, his cousin, which I have now had the honor of doing, my dear sir; and I have been deeply touched by the kindness with which the prince deigned to receive me and to remember our last interview"

"And who kept you so well informed, sir, of the prince's habits?" said Faringhea, unable to control his vexation.

"If I have been well informed as to his habits, my dear sir, I have had no such correct knowledge of yours," answered Dupont, with a mocking air; "for I assure you that I had no more notion of seeing you than you had of seeing me."

So saying, M. Dupont bowed with something like mock politeness to the half-caste, and got into the carriage, which drove off rapidly, leaving Faringhea in a state of the utmost surprise and anger.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

THE APPOINTMENT.

THE morning after Dupont's mission to Prince Djalma, the latter was walking with hasty and impatient step up and down the little saloon, which communicated, as we already know, with the greenhouse from which Adrienne

had entered when she first appeared to him. In remembrance of that day, he had chosen to dress himself as on the occasion in question; he wore the same tunic of white cashmere, with a cherry-colored turban, to match with his girdle; his gaiters, of scarlet velvet, embroidered with silver, displayed the fine form of his leg, and terminated in small white morocco slippers, with red heels. Happiness has so instantaneous, and, as it were, material an influence upon young, lively, and ardent natures, that Djalma, dejected and despairing only the day before, was no longer like the same person. The pale, transparent gold of his complexion was no longer tarnished by a livid hue. His large eyes, of late obscured like black diamonds by a humid vapor, now shone with mild radiance in the centre of their pearly setting; his lips, long pale, had recovered their natural color, which was rich and soft as the fine purple flowers of his country.

Ever and anon, pausing in his hasty walk, he stopped suddenly, and drew from his bosom a little piece of paper, carefully folded, which he pressed to his lips with enthusiastic ardor. Then, unable to restrain the expression of his happiness, he uttered a full and sonorous cry of joy, and with a bound he was in front of the plate-glass which separated the saloon from the conservatory, in which he had first seen Mdlle. de Cardoville. By a singular power of remembrance, or marvellous hallucination of a mind possessed by a fixed idea, Djalma had often seen, or fancied he saw, the adored semblance of Adrienne appear to him through this sheet of crystal. The illusion had been so complete, that, with his eyes ardently fixed on the vision he invoked, he had been able, with the aid of a pencil dipped in carmine, to trace with astonishing exactness, the profile of the ideal countenance which the delirium of his imagination had presented to his view.* It was before these delicate lines of bright carmine that Djalma now stood in deep contemplation, after perusing and reperusing, and raising twenty times to his lips, the letter he had received the night before from the hands of Dupont. Djalma was not alone. Faringhea watched all the movements of the prince, with a subtle, attentive, and gloomy aspect. Standing respectfully in a corner of the saloon, the half-caste appeared to be occupied in unfolding and spreading out Djalma's sash, light, silky Indian web, the brown ground

* Some collectors of curiosities possess such sketches, the product of Indian art, distinguished by their primitive simplicity.

of which was almost entirely concealed by the exquisite gold and silver embroidery with which it was overlaid.

The countenance of the half-caste wore a dark and gloomy expression. He could not deceive himself. The letter from Mdlle. de Cardoville, delivered by Dupont to Djalma, must have been the cause of the delight he now experienced, for, without doubt, he knew himself beloved. In that event, his obstinate silence towards Faringhea, ever since the latter had entered the saloon, greatly alarmed the half-caste, who could not tell what interpretation to put upon it. The night before, after parting with Dupont, he had hastened, in a state of anxiety easily understood, to look for the prince, in the hope of ascertaining the effect produced by Mdlle. de Cardoville's letter. But he found the parlor door closed, and when he knocked, he received no answer from within. Then, though the night was far advanced, he had dispatched a note to Rodin, in which he informed him of Dupont's visit and its probable intention. Djalma had indeed passed the night in a tumult of happiness and hope, and a fever of impatience quite impossible to describe. Repairing to his bed-chamber only towards the morning, he had taken a few moments of repose, and had then dressed himself without assistance.

Many times, but in vain, the half-caste had discreetly knocked at the door of Djalma's apartment. It was only in the early part of the afternoon that the prince had rung the bell to order his carriage to be ready by half-past two. Faringhea having presented himself, the prince had given him the order without looking at him, as he might have done to any other of his servants. Was this suspicion, aversion, or mere absence of mind on the part of Djalma? Such were the questions which the half-caste put to himself with growing anguish; for the designs of which he was the most active and immediate instrument might all be ruined by the least suspicion in the prince.

"Oh! the hours—the hours—how slow they are!" cried the young Indian, suddenly, in a low and trembling voice.

"The day before yesterday, my lord, you said the hours were very long," observed Faringhea, as he drew near Djalma in order to attract his attention. Seeing that he did not succeed in this, he advanced a few steps nearer, and resumed: "Your joy seems very great, my lord; tell the cause of it to your poor and faithful servant, that he also may rejoice with you."

If he heard the words, Djalma did not pay any attention

to them. He made no answer, and his large black eyes gazed upon vacancy. He seemed to smile admiringly upon some enchanting vision, and he folded his two hands upon his bosom, in the attitude which his countrymen assume at the hour of prayer. After some instants of contemplation, he said: "What o'clock is it?"—but he asked this question of himself, rather than of any third person.

"It will soon be two o'clock, my lord," said Faringhea.

Having heard this answer, Djalma seated himself, and hid his face in his hands, as if completely absorbed in some ineffable meditation. Urged on by his growing anxiety, and wishing at any cost to attract the attention of Djalma, Faringhea approached still nearer to him, and, almost certain of the effect of the words he was about to utter, said to him in a slow and emphatic voice: "My lord, I am sure that you owe the happiness which now transports you to Mdlle de Cardoville."

Hardly had this name been pronounced, than Djalma started from his chair, looked the half-breed full in the face, and exclaimed, as if only just aware of his presence, "Faringhea! you here!—what is the matter?"

"Your faithful servant shares in your joy, my lord."

"What joy?"

"That which the letter of Mdlle. de Cardoville has occasioned, my lord."

Djalma returned no answer, but his eye shone with so much serene happiness, that the half-caste recovered from his apprehensions. No cloud of doubt or suspicion obscured the radiant features of the prince. After a few moments of silence, Djalma fixed upon the half-caste a look half-veiled with a tear of joy, and said to him, with the expression of one whose heart overflows with love and happiness: "Oh! such delight is good—great—like heaven!—for it is heaven which——"

"You deserve this happiness, my lord, after so many sufferings."

"What sufferings?—Oh! yes I formerly suffered at Java; but that was years ago."

"My lord, this great good fortune does not astonish me. What have I always told you? Do not despair; feign a violent passion for some other woman, and then this proud young lady——"

At these words Djalma looked at the half-caste with so piercing a glance, that the latter stopped short; but the prince said to him with affectionate goodness, "Go on! I listen."

Then, leaning his chin upon his hand, and his elbow on his knee, he gazed so intently on Faringhea, and yet with such unutterable mildness, that even that iron soul was touched for a moment with a slight feeling of remorse.

"I was saying, my lord," he resumed, "that by following the counsels of your faithful slave, who persuaded you to feign a passsionate love for another woman, you have brought the proud Mdlle. de Cardoville to come to you. Did I not tell you it would be so?"

"Yes, you did tell me so," answered Djalma, still maintaining the same position, and examining the half-caste with the same fixed and mild attention.

The surprise of Faringhea increased; generally, the prince, without treating him with the least harshness, preserved the somewhat distant and imperious manners of their common country, and he had never before spoken to him with such extreme mildness. Knowing all the evil he had done the prince, and suspicious as the wicked must ever be, the half-caste thought for a moment, that his master's apparent kindness might conceal a snare. He continued, therefore, with less assurance, "Believe me, my lord, this day, if you do but know how to profit by your advantages, will console you for all your troubles, which have indeed been great—for only yesterday, though you were generous enough to forget it, only yesterday you suffered cruelly—but you were not alone in your sufferings. This proud young lady suffered also!"

"Do you think so?" said Djalma.

"Oh! it is quite sure, my lord. What must she not have felt, when she saw you at the theatre with another woman! —If she loved you only a little, she must have been deeply wounded in her self-esteem; if she loved you with passion, she must have been struck to the heart. At length, you see, wearied out with suffering, she has come to you."

"So that, any way, she must have suffered—and that does not move your pity?" said Djalma, in a constrained, but still very mild voice.

"Before thinking of others, my lord, I think of your distresses; and they touch me too nearly to leave me any pity for other woes," added Faringhea, hypocritically, so greatly had the influence of Rodin already modified the character of the Phansegar.

"It is strange!" said Djalma, speaking to himself, as he viewed the half-caste with a glance still kind but piercing.

"What is strange, my lord?"

"Nothing. But tell me, since your advice has hitherto prospered so well, what think you of the future?"

"Of the future, my lord?"

"Yes; in an hour I shall be with Mdlle. de Cardoville."

"That is a serious matter, my lord. The whole future will depend upon this interview."

"That is what I was just thinking."

"Believe me, my lord, women never love any so well, as the bold man who spares them the embarrassment of a refusal."

"Explain more fully."

"Well, my lord, they despise the timid and languishing lover, who asks humbly for what he might take by force."

"But to-day I shall meet Mdlle. de Cardoville for the first time."

"You have met her a thousand times in your dreams, my lord; and depend upon it, she has seen you also in her dreams, since she loves you. Every one of your amorous thoughts has found an echo in her heart. All your ardent adorations have been responded to by her. Love has not two languages, and, without meeting, you have said all that you had to say to each other. Now, it is for you to act as her master, and she will be yours entirely."

"It is strange—very strange!" said Djalma, a second time, without removing his eyes from Faringhea's face.

Mistaking the sense which the prince attached to these words, the half-caste resumed: "Believe me, my lord, however strange it may appear, this is the wisest course. Remember the past. Was it by playing the part of a timid lover that you have brought to your feet this proud young lady, my lord? No, it was by pretending to despise her, in favor of another woman. Therefore, let us have no weakness. The lion does not woo like the poor turtle-dove. What cares the sultan of the desert for a few plaintive howls from the lioness, who is more pleased than angry at his rude and wild caresses? Soon submissive, fearful and happy, she follows in the track of her master. Believe me, my lord—try everything—dare everything—and to-day you will become the adored sultan of this young lady, whose beauty all Paris admires."

After some minutes' silence, Djalma, shaking his head with an expression of tender pity, said to the half-caste, in his mild, sonorous voice: "Why betray me thus? Why advise me thus wickedly to use violence, terror, and surprise, towards an angel of purity, whom I respect as my

mother? Is it not enough for you to have been so long devoted to my enemies, whose hatred has followed me from Java?"

Had Djalma sprung upon the half-caste with bloodshot eye, menacing brow, and lifted poniard, the latter would have been less surprised, and perhaps less frightened, than when he heard the prince speak of his treachery in this tone of mild reproach.

He drew back hastily, as if about to stand on his guard. But Djalma resumed, with the same gentleness, "Fear nothing. Yesterday I should have killed you! But to-day happy love renders me too just, too merciful for that. I pity you, without any feeling of bitterness—for you must have been very unhappy, or you could not have become so wicked."

"My lord!" said the half-caste, with growing amazement.

"Yes, you must have suffered much, and met with little mercy, poor creature, to have become so merciless, in your hate, and proof against the sight of a happiness like mine. When I listened to you just now, and saw the sad perseverance of your hatred, I felt the deepest commiseration for you."

"I do not know, my lord—but——" stammered the half-caste, and was unable to find words to proceed.

"Come, now—what harm have I ever done you?"

"None, my lord," answered Faringhea.

"Then why do you hate me thus? why pursue me with so much animosity? Was it not enough to give me the perfidious counsel to feign a shameful love for the young girl that was brought hither, and who quitted the house disgusted at the miserable part she was to play?"

"Your feigned love for that young girl, my lord," replied Faringhea, gradually recovering his presence of mind, "conquered the coldness of——"

"Do not say that," resumed the prince, interrupting him with the same mildness. "If I enjoy this happiness, which makes me compassionate towards you, and raises me above myself, it is because Mdlle. de Cardoville now knows that I have never for a moment ceased to love her as she ought to be loved, with adoration and reverence. It was your intention to have parted us forever, and you had nearly succeeded."

"If you think this of me, my lord, you must look upon me as your most mortal enemy."

"Fear nothing, I tell you. I have no right to blame you.

In the madness of my grief, I listened to you and followed your advice. I was not only your dupe, but your accomplice. Only confess that, when you saw me at your mercy, dejected, crushed, despairing, it was cruel in you to advise the course that might have been most fatal to me."

"The ardor of my zeal may have deceived me, my lord."

"I am willing to believe it. And yet again to-day there were the same evil counsels. You had no more pity for my happiness than for my sorrow. The rapture of my heart inspires you with only one desire—that of changing this rapture into despair."

"I, my lord!"

"Yes, you. It was your intention to ruin me—to dishonor me forever in the eyes of Mdlle. de Cardoville. Now, tell me—why this furious hate? what have I done to you?"

"You misjudge me, my lord—and——"

"Listen to me. I do not wish you to be any longer wicked and treacherous. I wish to make you good. In our country, they charm serpents, and tame the wildest tigers. You are a man, with a mind to reason, a heart to love, and I will tame you too by gentleness. This day has bestowed on me divine happiness; you shall have good cause to bless this day. What can I do for you? what would you have—gold? You shall have it. Do you desire more than gold? Do you desire a friend, to console you for the sorrows that made you wicked, and to teach you to be good? Though a king's son, I will be that friend—in spite of the evil—ay, because of the evil you have done me. Yes; I will be your sincere friend, and it shall be my delight to say to myself: 'The day on which I learned that my angel loved me, my happiness was great indeed—for, in the morning, I had an implacable enemy, and, ere night, his hatred was changed to friendship.' Believe me, Faringhea, misery makes crime, but happiness produces virtue. Be happy!"

At this moment the clock struck two. The prince started. It was time to go on his visit to Adrienne. The handsome countenance of Djalma, doubly embellished by the mild, ineffable expression with which it had been animated whilst he was talking to the half-caste, now seemed illumined with almost divine radiance.

Approaching Faringhea, he extended his hand with the utmost grace and courtesy, saying to him, "Your hand!"

The half-caste, whose brow was bathed with a cold sweat, whose countenance was pale and agitated, seemed to hesitate for an instant; then, overawed, conquered, fascinated, he

offered his trembling hand to the prince, who pressed it, and said to him, in their country's fashion, "You have laid your hand honestly in a friend's; this hand shall never be closed against you. Faringhea, farewell! I now feel myself more worthy to kneel before my angel."

And Djalma went out, on his way to the appointment with Adrienne. In spite of his ferocity, in spite of the pitiless hate he bore to the whole human race, the dark sectary of Bowanee was staggered by the noble and clement words of Djalma, and said to himself, with terror, "I have taken his hand. He is now sacred for me."

Then, after a moment's silence, a thought occurred to him, and he exclaimed, "Yes—but he will not be sacred for him who, according to the answer of last night, waits for him at the door of the house."

So saying, the half-caste hastened into the next room, which looked upon the street, and, raising a corner of the curtain, muttered anxiously to himself, "The carriage moves off—the man approaches. Perdition! it is gone and I see no more."

CHAPTER XL.

ANXIETY.

By a singular coincidence of ideas, Adrienne, like Djalma, had wished to be dressed exactly in the same costume as at their interview in the house in the Rue Blanche. For the site of this solemn meeting, so important to her future happiness, Adrienne had chosen, with habitual tact, the grand drawing-room of Cardoville House, in which hung many family portraits. The most apparent were those of her father and mother. The room was large and lofty, and furnished, like those which preceded it, with all the imposing splendor of the age of Louis XIV. The ceiling, painted by Lebrun, to represent the Triumph of Apollo, displayed his bold designing and vigorous coloring, in the centre of a wide cornice, magnificently carved and gilt, and supported at its angles by four large gilt figures, representing the Seasons. Huge panels, covered with crimson damask, and set in frames, served as the background to the family portraits which adorned this apartment. It is easier to conceive than describe the thousand conflicting emotions which agitated the bosom of Mdlle. de

Cardoville as the moment approached for her interview with Djalma. Their meeting had been hitherto prevented by so many painful obstacles, and Adrienne was so well aware of the vigilant and active perfidy of her enemies, that even now she doubted of her happiness. Every instant, in spite of herself, her eyes wandered to the clock. A few minutes more, and the hour of the appointment would strike. It struck at last. Every reverberation was echoed from the depth of Adrienne's heart. She considered that Djalma's modest reserve had, doubtless, prevented his coming before the moment fixed by herself. Far from blaming this discretion, she fully appreciated it. But, from that moment, at the least noise in the adjoining apartments, she held her breath and listened with the anxiety of expectation.

For the first few minutes which followed the hour at which she expected Djalma, Mdlle. de Cardoville felt no serious apprehension, and calmed her impatience by the notion (which appears childish enough to those who have never known the feverish agitation of waiting for a happy meeting), that perhaps the clocks in the Rue Blanche might vary a little from those in the Rue d'Anjou. But when this supposed variation, conceivable enough in itself, could no longer explain a delay of a quarter of an hour, of twenty minutes, of more, Adrienne felt her anxiety gradually increase. Two or three times the young girl rose, with palpitating heart, and went on tip-toe to listen at the door of the saloon. She heard nothing. The clock struck half-past three.

Unable to suppress her growing terror, and clinging to a last hope, Adrienne returned towards the fireplace and rang the bell. After which she endeavored to compose her features, so as to betray no outward sign of emotion. In a few seconds, a gray-haired footman, dressed in black, opened the door, and waited in respectful silence for the orders of his mistress. The latter said to him, in a calm voice, "Andrew, request Hebe to give you the smelling bottle that I left on the chimney-piece in my room, and bring it me here." Andrew bowed; but just as he was about to withdraw to execute Adrienne's order, which was only a pretext to enable her to ask a question without appearing to attach much importance to it in her servant's eyes, already informed of the expected visit of the prince, Mdlle. de Cardoville added, with an air of indifference, "Pray, is that clock right?"

Andrew drew out his watch, and replied as he cast his

eyes upon it, "Yes, mademoiselle. I set my watch by the Tuileries. It is more than half-past three."

"Very well—thank you!" said Adrienne kindly.

Andrew again bowed; but, before going out, he said to Adrienne, "I forgot to tell you, lady, that Marshal Simon called about an hour ago; but, as you were only to be at home to Prince Djalma, we told him that you received no company."

"Very well," said Adrienne. With another low bow, Andrew quitted the room, and all returned to silence.

For the precise reason that, up to the last minute of the hour previous to the time fixed for her interview with Djalma, the hopes of Adrienne had not been disturbed by the slightest shadow of doubt, the disappointment she now felt was the more dreadful. Casting a desponding look at one of the portraits placed above her, she murmured, with a plaintive and despairing accent, "Oh, mother!"

Hardly had Mdlle. de Cardoville uttered the words than the windows were slightly shaken by a carriage rolling into the courtyard. The young lady started, and was unable to repress a low cry of joy. Her heart bounded at the thought of meeting Djalma, for this time she felt that he was really come. She was quite as certain of it as if she had seen him. She resumed her seat and brushed away a tear suspended from her long eyelashes. Her hand trembled like a leaf. The sound of several doors opening and shutting proved that the young lady was right in her conjecture. The gilded panels of the drawing-room door soon turned upon their hinges, and the prince appeared.

While a second footman ushered in Djalma, Andrew placed on a gilded table, within reach of his mistress, a little silver salver, on which stood the crystal smelling-bottle. Then he withdrew, and the door of the room was closed. The prince and Mdlle. de Cardoville were left alone together.

CHAPTER XLI.

ADRIENNE AND DJALMA.

The prince had slowly approached Mdlle. de Cardoville. Notwithstanding the impetuosity of the Oriental's passions, his uncertain and timid step—timid, yet graceful—betrayed his profound emotion. He did not venture to lift his eyes to

Adrienne's face; he had suddenly become very pale, and his finely formed hands, folded over his bosom in the attitude of adoration, trembled violently. With head bent down, he remained standing at a little distance from Adrienne. This embarrassment, ridiculous in any other person, appeared touching in this prince of twenty years of age, endowed with an almost fabulous intrepidity, and of so heroic and generous a character, that no traveller could speak of the son of Kadja-sing without a tribute of admiration and respect. Sweet emotion! chaste reserve! doubly interesting if we consider that the burning passions of this youth were all the more inflammable, because they had hitherto been held in check.

No less embarrassed than her cousin, Adrienne de Cardoville remained seated. Like Djalma, she cast down her eyes; but the burning blush on her cheeks, the quick heaving of her virgin bosom, revealed an emotion that she did not even attempt to hide. Notwithstanding the powers of her mind, by turns gay, graceful, and witty—notwithstanding the decision of her proud and independent character, and her complete acquaintance with the manners of the world—Adrienne shared Djalma's simple and enchanting awkwardness, and partook of that kind of temporary weakness, beneath which these two pure, ardent, and loving beings appeared sinking—as if unable to support the boiling agitation of the senses, combined with the intoxicating excitement of the heart. And yet their eyes had not met. Each seemed to fear the first electric shock of the other's glance—that invincible attraction of two impassioned beings—that sacred fire, which suddenly kindles the blood, and lifts two mortals from earth to heaven; for it is to approach the Divinity to give one's self up with religious fervor to the most noble and irresistible sentiment that He has implanted within us—the only sentiment that, in His adorable wisdom, the Dispenser of all good has vouchsafed to sanctify, by endowing it with a spark of His own creative energy.

Djalma was the first to raise his eyes. They were moist and sparkling. The excitement of passionate love, the burning ardor of his age, so long repressed, the intense admiration in which he held ideal beauty, were all expressed in his look, mingled with respectful timidity, and gave to the countenance of this youth an undefinable, irresistible character. Yes, irresistible!—for, when Adrienne encountered his glance, she trembled in every limb, and felt herself

attracted by a magnetic power. Already, her eyes were heavy with a kind of intoxicating languor, when, by a great effort of will and dignity, she succeeded in overcoming this delicious confusion, rose from her chair, and said to Djalma in a trembling voice: "Prince, I am happy to receive you here." Then, pointing to one of the portraits suspended above her, she added, as if introducing him to a living person: "Prince—my mother!"

With an instinct of rare delicacy, Adrienne had thus summoned her mother to be present at her interview with Djalma. It seemed a security for herself and the prince, against the seductions of a first interview—which was likely to be all the more perilous, that they both knew themselves madly loved, that they both were free, and had only to answer to Providence for the treasures of happiness and enjoyment with which He had so magnificently endowed them. The prince understood Adrienne's thoughts; so that, when the young lady pointed to the portrait, Djalma, by a spontaneous movement full of grace and simplicity, knelt down before the picture, and said to it in a gentle, but manly voice: "I will love and revere you as my mother. And, in thought, my mother too shall be present, and stand like you, beside your child!"

No better answer could have been given to the feeling which induced Mdlle. de Cardoville to place herself, as it were, under the protection of her mother. From that moment, confident in Djalma, confident in herself, the young lady felt more at her ease, and the delicious sense of happiness replaced those exciting emotions, which had at first so violently agitated her.

Then, seating herself once more, she said to Djalma, as she pointed to the opposite chair: "Pray take a seat, my dear cousin; and allow me to call you so, for there is too much ceremony in the word prince; and do you call me cousin also, for I find other names too grave. Having settled this point, we can talk together like old friends."

"Yes, cousin," answered Djalma, blushing.

"And, as frankness is proper between friends," resumed Adrienne, "I have first to make you a reproach," she added, with a half-smile.

The prince had remained standing, with his arm resting on the chimney-piece, in an attitude full of grace and respect.

"Yes, cousin," continued Adrienne, "a reproach, that you will perhaps forgive me for making. I had expected you a little sooner."

"Perhaps, cousin, you may blame me for having come so soon."

"What do you mean?"

"At the moment when I left home, a man, whom I did not know, approached my carriage, and said to me, with such an air of sincerity that I believed him: 'You are able to save the life of a person who has been a second father to you. Marshal Simon is in great danger, and, to rescue him, you must follow me on the instant——'"

"It was a snare," cried Adrienne, hastily. "Marshal Simon was here, scarcely an hour ago."

"Indeed!" exclaimed Djalma, joyfully, and as if he had been relieved from a great weight. "Then there will be nothing to sadden this happy day!"

"But, cousin," resumed Adrienne, "how came you not to suspect this emissary?"

"Some words, which afterwards escaped from him, inspired me with doubts," answered Djalma: "but at first I followed him, fearing the marshal might be in danger—for I know that he also has enemies."

"Now that I reflect on it, you were quite right, cousin, for some new plot against the marshal was probable enough; and the least doubt was enough to induce you to go to him."

"I did so—even though you were waiting for me."

"It was a generous sacrifice; and my esteem for you is increased by it, if it could be increased," said Adrienne, with emotion. "But what became of this man?"

"At my desire, he got into the carriage with me. Anxious about the marshal, and in despair at seeing the time wasted, that I was to have passed with you, cousin, I pressed him with all sorts of questions. Several times, he replied to me with embarrassment, and then the idea struck me that the whole might be a snare. Remembering all that they had already attempted, to ruin me in your opinion, I immediately changed my course. The vexation of the man who accompanied me then became so visible, that I ought to have had no doubt upon the subject. Still, when I thought of Marshal Simon, I felt a kind of vague remorse, which you, cousin, have now happily set at rest."

"Those people are implacable!" said Adrienne; "but our happiness will be stronger than their hate."

After a moment's silence, she resumed, with her habitual frankness: "My dear cousin, it is impossible for me to conceal what I have at heart. Let us talk for a few seconds

of the past, which was made so painful to us, and then we will forget it forever, like an evil dream."

"I will answer you sincerely, at the risk of injuring myself," said the prince.

"How could you make up your mind to exhibit yourself in public with——?"

"With that young girl?" interrupted Djalma.

"Yes, cousin," replied Mdlle. de Cardoville, and she waited for Djalma's answer with anxious curiosity.

"A stranger to the customs of this country," said Djalma, without any embarrassment, for he spoke the truth, "with a mind weakened with despair, and misled by the fatal counsels of a man devoted to my enemies, I believed, even as I was told, that, by displaying before you the semblance of another love, I should excite your jealousy, and thus——"

"Enough, cousin; I understand it all," said Adrienne hastily, interrupting Djalma in her turn, that she might spare him a painful confession. "I too must have been blinded by despair, not to have seen through this wicked plot, especially after your rash and intrepid action. To risk death for the sake of my bouquet!" added Adrienne, shuddering at the mere remembrance. "But one last question," she resumed, "though I am already sure of your answer. Did you receive a letter that I wrote to you, on the morning of the day in which I saw you at the theatre?"

Djalma made no reply. A dark cloud passed over his fine countenance, and, for a second, his features assumed so menacing an expression, that Adrienne was terrified at the effect produced by her words. But this violent agitation soon passed away, and Djalma's brow became once more calm and serene.

"I have been more merciful than I thought," said the prince to Adrienne, who looked at him with astonishment. "I wished to come hither worthy of you, my cousin. I pardoned the man who, to serve my enemies, had given me all those fatal counsels. The same person, I am sure, must have intercepted your letter. Just now, at the memory of the evils he thus caused me, I, for a moment, regretted my clemency. But then, again, I thought of your letter of yesterday—and my anger is all gone."

"Then the sad time of fear and suspicion is over—suspicion, that made me doubt of your sentiments, and you of mine. Oh, yes! far removed from us be that fatal past!" cried Adrienne de Cardoville, with deep joy.

Then, as if she had relieved her heart from the last thought

of sadness, she continued: "The future is all our own—the radiant future, without cloud or obstacle, pure in the immensity of its horizon, and extending beyond the reach of sight!"

It is impossible to describe the tone of enthusiastic hope which accompanied these words. But suddenly Adrienne's features assumed an expression of touching melancholy, and she added, in a voice of profound emotion: "And yet—at this hour—so many unfortunate creatures suffer pain!"

This simple touch of pity for the misfortunes of others, at the moment when the noble maiden herself attained to the highest point of happiness, had such an effect on Djalma, that involuntarily he fell on his knees before Adrienne, clasped his hands together, and turned towards her his fine countenance, with an almost daring expression. Then, hiding his face in his hands, he bowed his head without speaking a single word. There was a moment of deep silence. Adrienne was the first to break it, as she saw a tear steal through the slender fingers of the prince.

"My friend! what is the matter?" she exclaimed, as with a movement rapid as thought, she stooped forward, and taking hold of Djalma's hands, drew them from before his face. That face was bathed in tears.

"You weep!" cried Mdlle. de Cardoville, so much agitated that she kept the hands of Djalma in her own; and, unable to dry his tears, the young Hindoo allowed them to flow like so many drops of crystal over the pale gold of his cheeks.

"There is not in this wide world a happiness like to mine!" said the prince, in his soft, melodious voice, and with a kind of exhaustion: "therefore do I feel great sadness, and so it should be. You give me heaven—and were I to give you the whole earth, it would be but a poor return. Alas! what can man do for a divinity, but humbly bless and adore? He can never hope to return the gifts bestowed: and this makes him suffer—not in his pride—but in his heart!"

Djalma did not exaggerate. He said what he really felt; and the rather hyperbolical form, familiar to Oriental nations, could alone express his thought. The tone of his regret was so sincere, his humility so gentle and full of simplicity, that Adrienne, also moved to tears, answered him with an effusion of serious tenderness, "My friend, we are both at the supreme point of happiness. Our future felicity appears to have no limits, and yet, though derived

from different sources, sad reflections have come to both of us. It is, you see, that there are some sorts of happiness, which make you dizzy with their own immensity. For a moment, the heart, the mind, the soul, are incapable of containing so much bliss; it overflows and drowns us. Thus the flowers sometimes hang their heads, oppressed by the too ardent rays of the sun, which is yet their love and life. Oh, my friend! this sadness may be great, but it is also sweet!"

As she uttered these words, the voice of Adrienne grew fainter and fainter, and her head bowed lower, as if she were indeed sinking beneath the weight of her happiness. Djalma had remained kneeling before her, his hands in hers —so that as she thus bent forward, her ivory forehead and golden hair touched the amber-colored brow and ebon curls of Djalma. And the sweet, silent tears of the two young lovers flowed together, and mingled as they fell on their clasped hands.

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Whilst this scene was passing in Cardoville House, Agricola had gone to the Rue de Vaugirard, to deliver a letter from Adrienne to M. Hardy.

CHAPTER XLII.

"THE IMITATION."

As we have already said, M. Hardy occupied a pavilion in the "Retreat" annexed to the house in the Rue de Vaugirard, inhabited by a goodly number of the reverend fathers of the Company of Jesus. Nothing could be calmer and more silent than this dwelling. Every one spoke in whispers, and the servants themselves had something oily in their words, something sanctified in their very walk.

Like all that is subject to the chilling and destructive influences of these men, this mournfully quiet house was entirely wanting in life and animation. The boarders passed an existence of wearisome and icy monotony, only broken by the use of certain devotional exercises; and thus, in accordance with the selfish calculation of the reverend fathers, the mind, deprived of all nourishment and all external support, soon began to droop and pine away in solitude. The heart seemed to beat more slowly, the soul was benumbed,

the character weakened; at last, all freewill, all power of discrimination, was extinguished, and the boarders, submitting to the same process of self-annihilation as the novices of the Company, became, like them, mere "corpses" in the hands of the brotherhood.

The object of these manœuvres was clear and simple. They secured the means of obtaining all kinds of donations, the constant aim of the skilful policy and merciless cupidity of these priests. By the aid of enormous sums, of which they thus become the possessors or the trustees, they follow out and obtain the success of their projects, even though murder, incendiarism, revolt, and all the horrors of civil war, excited by and through them, should drench in blood the lands over which they seek to extend their dark dominion.

Such, then, was the asylum of peace and innocence in which François Hardy had taken refuge. He occupied the ground-floor of a summer-house, which opened upon a portion of the garden. His apartments had been judiciously chosen, for we know with what profound and diabolical craft the reverend fathers avail themselves of material influences, to make a deep impression upon the minds they are moulding to their purpose. Imagine a prospect bounded by a high wall, of a blackish gray, half-covered with ivy, the plant peculiar to ruins. A dark avenue of old yew-trees, so fit to shade the grave with their sepulchral verdure, extended from this wall to a little semicircle, in front of the apartment generally occupied by M. Hardy. Two or three mounds of earth, bordered with box, symmetrically cut, completed the charms of this garden, which in every respect resembled a cemetery.

It was about two o'clock in the afternoon. Though the April sun shone brightly, its rays, intercepted by the high wall of which we have spoken, could not penetrate into that portion of the garden, obscure, damp, and cold as a cavern, which communicated with M. Hardy's apartment. The room was furnished with a perfect sense of the comfortable. A soft carpet covered the floor; thick curtains of dark green baize, the same color as the walls, sheltered an excellent bed, and hung in folds about the glass-door, which opened on the garden. Some pieces of mahogany furniture, plain, but very clean and bright, stood round the room. Above the secretary, placed just in front of the bed, was a large ivory crucifix, upon a black velvet ground. The chimney-piece was adorned with a clock, in an ebony case, with ivory orna-

ments representing all sorts of gloomy emblems, such as hour-glasses, scythes, death's-heads, etc. Now imagine this scene in twilight, with its solitary and mournful silence, only broken at the hour of prayer by the lugubrious sound of the bells of the neighboring chapel, and you will recognize the infernal skill, with which these dangerous priests know how to turn to account every external object, when they wish to influence the mind of those they are anxious to gain over.

And this was not all. After appealing to the senses, it was necessary to address themselves to the intellect—and this was the method adopted by the reverend fathers. A single book—but one—was left, as if by chance, within reach. This book was Thomas à Kempis' "Imitation." But as it might happen that M. Hardy would not have the courage or the desire to read this book, thoughts and reflections borrowed from its merciless pages, and written in very large characters, were suspended in black frames close to the bed, or at other parts within sight, so that, involuntarily, in the sad leisure of his inactive dejection, the dweller's eyes were almost necessarily attracted by them. To that fatal circle of despairing thoughts they confined the already weakened mind of this unfortunate man, so long a prey to the most acute sorrow. What he read mechanically, every instant of the day and night, whenever the blessed sleep fled from his eyes inflamed with tears, was not enough merely to plunge the soul of the victim into incurable despair, but also to reduce him to the corpse-like obedience required by the Society of Jesus. In that awful book may be found a thousand terrors to operate on weak minds, a thousand slavish maxims to chain and degrade the pusillanimous soul.

And now imagine M. Hardy carried wounded into this house; while his heart, torn by bitter grief and the sense of horrible treachery, bled even faster than his external injuries. Attended with the utmost care, and thanks to the acknowledged skill of Dr. Baleinier, M. Hardy soon recovered from the hurts he had received when he threw himself into the embers of his burning factory. Yet, in order to favor the projects of the reverend fathers, a drug, harmless enough in its effects, but destined to act for a time upon the mind of the patient, and often employed for that purpose in similar important cases by the pious doctor, was administered to Hardy, and had kept him pretty long in a state of mental torpor. To a soul agonized by cruel deceptions, it appears an inestimable benefit to be plunged into that kind of torpor, which at least prevents one from dwelling upon the past

Hardy resigned himself entirely to this profound apathy, and at length came to regard it as the supreme good. Thus do unfortunate wretches, tortured by cruel diseases, accept with gratitude the opiate which kills them slowly, but which at least deadens the sense of pain.

In sketching the portrait of M. Hardy, we tried to give some idea of the exquisite delicacy of his tender soul, of his painful susceptibility with regard to anything base or wicked, and of his extreme goodness, uprightness, and generosity. We now allude to these admirable qualities, because we must observe, that with him, as with almost all who possess them, they were not, and could not be, united with an energetic and resolute character. Admirably persevering in good deeds, the influence of this excellent man was insinuating rather than commanding; it was not by the bold energy and somewhat overbearing will, peculiar to other men of great and noble heart, that Hardy had realized the prodigy of his Common Dwelling-house; it was by affectionate persuasion, for with him mildness took the place of force. At sight of any baseness or injustice, he did not rouse himself, furious and threatening; but he suffered intense pain. He did not boldly attack the criminal, but he turned away from him in pity and sorrow. And then his loving heart, so full of feminine delicacy, had an irresistible longing for the blessed contact of dear affections; they alone could keep it alive. Even as a poor, frail bird dies with the cold, when it can no longer lie close to its brethren, and receive and communicate the sweet warmth of the maternal nest. And now this sensitive organization, this extremely susceptible nature, receives blow after blow from sorrows and deceptions, one of which would suffice to shake, if it did not conquer, the firmest and most resolute character. Hardy's best friend has infamously betrayed him. His adored mistress has abandoned him.

The house which he had founded for the benefit of his workmen, whom he loved as brethren, is reduced to a heap of ashes. What then happens? All the springs of his soul are at once broken. Too feeble to resist such frightful attacks, too fatally deceived to seek refuge in other affections, too much discouraged to think of laying the first stone of any new edifice—this poor heart, isolated from every salutary influence, finds oblivion of the world and of itself in a kind of gloomy torpor. And if some remaining instincts of life and affection, at long intervals, endeavored to rouse themselves within him, and if, half-opening his mind's eye,

which he had kept closed against the present, the past, and the future, Hardy looks around him—what does he see? Only these sentences, so full of terrible despair:

"Thou art nothing but dust and ashes. Grief and tears art thy portion. Believe not in any son of man. There are no such things as friendship or ties of kindred. All human affections are false. Die in the morning, and thou wilt be forgotten before night. Be humble—despise thyself—and let others despise thee. Think not, reason not, live not—but commit thy fate to the hands of a superior, who will think and reason for thee. Weep, suffer, think upon death. Yes, death! always death—that should be thy thought when thou thinkest—but it is better not to think at all. Let a feeling of ceaseless woe prepare thy way to heaven. It is only by sorrow that we are welcome to the terrible God whom we adore!"

Such were the consolations offered to this unfortunate man. Affrighted, he again closed his eyes, and fell back into his lethargy. As for leaving this gloomy retreat, he could not, or rather he did not desire to do so. He had lost the power of will; and then, it must be confessed, he had finished by getting accustomed to this house, and liked it well—they paid him such discreet attentions, and yet left him so much alone with his grief—there reigned all around such a death-like silence, which harmonized closely with the silence of his heart; and that was now the tomb of his last love, last friendship, last hope. All energy was dead within him! Then began that slow, but inevitable transformation, so judiciously foreseen by Rodin, who directed the whole of this machination, even in its smallest details. At first alarmed by the dreadful maxims which surrounded him, M. Hardy had at length accustomed himself to read them over almost mechanically, just as the captive, in his mournful hours of leisure, counts the nails in the door of his prison, or the bars of the grated window. This was already a great point gained by the reverend fathers.

And soon his weakened mind was struck with the apparent correctness of these false and melancholy aphorisms.

Thus he read: "Do not count upon the affection of any human creature"—and he had himself been shamefully betrayed.

"Man is born to sorrow and despair"—and he was himself despairing.

"There is no rest save in the cessation of thought"—and the slumber of his mind had brought some relief to his pain.

Peepholes, skilfully concealed by the hangings and in the wainscoting of these apartments, enabled the reverend fathers at all times to see and hear the boarders, and above all to observe their countenance and manner, when they believed themselves to be alone. Every exclamation of grief which escaped Hardy in his gloomy solitude, was repeated to Father d'Aigrigny by a mysterious listener. The reverend father, following scrupulously Rodin's instructions, had at first visited his boarder very rarely. We have said, that when Father d'Aigrigny wished it, he could display an almost irresistible power of charming, and accordingly he threw all his tact and skill into the interviews he had with Hardy, when he came from time to time to inquire after his health. Informed of everything by his spies, and aided by his natural sagacity, he soon saw all the use that might be made of the physical and moral prostration of the boarder. Certain beforehand that Hardy would not take the hint, he spoke to him frequently of the gloom of the house, advising him affectionately to leave it, if he felt oppressed by its monotony, or at all events to seek beyond its walls for some pleasure and amusement. To speak of pleasure and amusement to this unfortunate man, was in his present state to insure a refusal, and so it of course happened. Father d'Aigrigny did not at first try to gain the recluse's confidence, nor did he speak to him of sorrow; but every time he came, he appeared to take such a tender interest in him, and showed it by a few simple and well-timed words. By degrees, these interviews, at first so rare became more frequent and longer. Endowed with a flow of honeyed, insinuating, and persuasive eloquence, Father d'Aigrigny naturally took for his theme those gloomy maxims, to which Hardy's attention was now so often directed.

Supple, prudent, skilful, knowing that the hermit had hitherto professed that generous natural religion which teaches the grateful adoration of God, the love of humanity, the worship of what is just and good, and which, disdaining dogmas, professes the same veneration for Marcus Aurelius as for Confucius, for Plato as for Christ, for Moses as for Lycurgus—Father d'Aigrigny did not at first attempt to convert him, but began by incessantly reminding him of the abominable deceptions practised upon him; and, instead of describing such treachery as an exception in life—instead of trying to calm, encourage, and revive this drooping soul—instead of exhorting Hardy to seek oblivion and consolation in the discharge of his duties towards humanity, towards

his brethren, whom he had previously loved and succored —Father d'Aigrigny strove to inflame the bleeding wounds of the unfortunate man, painted the human race in the most atrocious blackness, and, by declaring all men treacherous, ungrateful, wicked, succeeded in rendering his despair incurable. Having attained this object, the Jesuit took another step. Knowing Hardy's admirable goodness of heart, and profiting by the weakened state of his mind, he spoke to him of the consolation to be derived by a man overwhelmed with sorrow, from the belief that every one of his tears, instead of being unfruitful, was in fact agreeable to God, and might aid in the salvation of souls—the belief, as the reverend father adroitly added, that by faith alone can sorrow be made useful to humanity, and acceptable to Divinity.

Whatever impiety, whatever atrocious Machiavelism there was in these detestable maxims, which make of a loving-kind Deity a being delighted with the tears of his creatures, was thus skilfully concealed from Hardy's eyes, whose generous instincts were still alive. Soon did this loving and tender soul, whom unworthy priests were driving to a sort of moral suicide, find a mournful charm in the fiction, that his sorrows would at least be profitable to other men. It was at first only a fiction; but the enfeebled mind which takes pleasure in such a fable, finishes by receiving it as a reality, and by degrees will submit to the consequences. Such was Hardy's moral and physical state, when, by means of a servant who had been bought over, he received from Agricola Baudoin a letter requesting an interview. Alone, the workman could not have broken the band of the Jesuit's pleadings, but he was accompanied by Gabriel, whose eloquence and reasonings were of a most convincing nature to a spirit like Hardy's.

It is unnecessary to point out to the reader, with what dignified reserve Gabriel had confined himself to the most generous means of rescuing Hardy from the deadly influence of the reverend fathers. It was repugnant to the great soul of the young missionary, to stoop to a revelation of the odious plots of these priests. He would only have taken this extreme course, had his powerful and sympathetic words have failed to have any effect on Hardy's blindness. About a quarter of an hour had elapsed since Gabriel's departure, when the servant appointed to wait on this boarder of the reverend fathers entered and delivered to him a letter.

"From whom is this?" asked Hardy.

"From a boarder in the house, sir," answered the servant bowing.

This man had a crafty and hypocritical face; he wore his hair combed over his forehead, spoke in a low voice, and always cast down his eyes. Waiting the answer, he joined his hands, and began to twiddle his thumbs. Hardy opened the letter, and read as follows:

SIR,—I have only just heard, by mere chance, that you also inhabit this respectable house: a long illness, and the retirement in which I live, will explain my ignorance of your being so near. Though we have only met once, sir, the circumstance which led to that meeting was of so serious a nature, that I cannot think you have forgotten it."

Hardy stopped, and tasked his memory for an explanation, and not finding anything to put him on the right track, he continued to read:

"This circumstance excited in me a feeling of such deep and respectful sympathy for you, sir, that I cannot resist my anxious desire to wait upon you, particularly as I learn, that you intend leaving this house today—a piece of information I have just derived from the excellent and worthy Abbé Gabriel, one of the men I most love, esteem, and reverence. May I venture to hope, sir, that just at the moment of quitting our common retreat to return to the world, you will deign to receive favorably the request, however intrusive, of a poor old man, whose life will henceforth be passed in solitude, and who cannot therefore have any prospect of meeting you, in that vortex of society which he has abandoned forever. Waiting the honor of your answer, I beg you to accept, sir, the assurance of the sentiments of high esteem with which I remain, sir, with the deepest respect,

"Your very humble and most obedient servant,

"RODIN."

After reading this letter and the signature of the writer, Hardy remained for some time in deep thought, without being able to recollect the name of Rodin, or to what serious circumstance he alluded.

After a silence of some duration, he said to the servant: "M. Rodin gave you this letter?"

"Yes, sir."

"And who is M. Rodin?"

"A good old gentleman, who is just recovering from a long illness, that almost carried him off. Lately, he has been getting better, but he is still so weak and melancholy, that it makes one sad to see him. It is a great pity, for there is not a better and more worthy gentleman in the house—unless it be you, sir," added the servant, bowing with an air of flattering respect.

"M. Rodin;" said Hardy, thoughtfully. "It is singular, that I should not remember the name nor any circumstance connected with it."

"If you will give me your answer, sir," resumed the servant, "I will take it to M. Rodin. He is now with Father d'Aigrigny, to whom he is bidding farewell."

"Farewell?"

"Yes, sir, the post-horses have just come."

"Post-horses for whom?" asked Hardy.

"For Father d'Aigrigny, sir."

"He is going on a journey then!" said Hardy, with some surprise.

"Oh! he will not, I think, be long absent," said the servant, with a confidential air, "for the reverend father takes no one with him, and but very light luggage. No doubt, the reverend father will come to say farewell to you, sir, before he starts. But what answer shall I give M. Rodin?"

The letter, just received, was couched in such polite terms—it spoke of Gabriel with so much respect—that Hardy, urged moreover by a natural curiosity, and seeing no motive to refuse this interview before quitting the house, said to the servant: "Please tell M. Rodin, that if he will give himself the trouble to come to me, I shall be glad to see him."

"I will let him know immediately, sir," answered the servant, bowing as he left the room.

When alone, Hardy, while wondering who this M. Rodin could be, began to make some slight preparations for his departure. For nothing in the world would he have passed another night in this house; and, in order to keep up his courage, he recalled every instant the mild, evangelical language of Gabriel, just as the superstitious recite certain litanies, with a view of escaping from temptation.

The servant soon returned, and said: "M. Rodin is here, sir."

"Beg him to walk in."

Rodin entered, clad in his long black dressing-gown, and with his old silk cap in his hand. The servant then withdrew. The day was just closing. Hardy rose to meet Rodin, whose features he did not at first distinguish. But, as the reverend father approached the window, Hardy looked narrowly at him for an instant, and then uttered an exclamation, wrung from him by surprise and painful remembrance. But, recovering himself from this first movement, Hardy said to the Jesuit, in an agitated voice: "You here,

sir?' Oh, you are right! It was indeed a very serious circumstance that first brought us together."

"Oh, my dear sir!" said Rodin, in a kindly and unctuous tone; "I was sure you would not have forgotten me."

CHAPTER XLIII.

PRAYER.

It will doubtless be remembered that Rodin had gone (although a stranger to Hardy) to visit him at his factory, and inform him of De Blessac's shameful treachery—a dreadful blow, which had only preceded by a few moments a second no less horrible misfortune; for it was in the presence of Rodin that Hardy had learned the unexpected departure of the woman he adored. Painful to him must have been the sudden appearance of Rodin. Yet, thanks to the salutary influence of Gabriel's counsels, he recovered himself by degrees, and the contraction of his features being succeeded by a melancholy calm, he said to Rodin: "I did not indeed expect to meet you, sir, in this house."

"Alas, sir!" answered Rodin, with a sigh, "I did not expect to come hither, probably to end my days beneath this roof, when I went, without being acquainted with you, but only as one honest man should serve another, to unveil to you a great infamy."

"Indeed, sir, you then rendered me a true service; perhaps, in that painful moment, I did not fully express my gratitude; for, at the same moment in which you revealed to me the treachery of M. de Blessac——"

"You were overwhelmed by another piece of painful intelligence," said Rodin, interrupting M. Hardy; "I shall never forget the sudden arrival of that poor woman, who, pale and affrighted, and without considering my presence, came to inform you that a person who was exceedingly dear to you had quitted Paris abruptly."

"Yes, sir; and, without stopping to thank you, I set out immediately," answered Hardy, with a mournful air.

"Do you know, sir," said Rodin, after a moment's silence, "that there are sometimes very strange coincidences?"

"To what do you allude, sir?"

"While I went to inform you that you were betrayed in so infamous a manner—I was myself——"

Rodin paused, as if unable to control his deep emotion,

and his countenance wore the expression of such overpowering grief that Hardy said to him, with interest: "What ails you, sir?"

"Forgive me," replied Rodin, with a bitter smile. "Thanks to the ghostly counsels of the angelic Abbé Gabriel, I have reached a sort of resignation. Still, there are certain memories which affect me with the most acute pain. I told you," resumed Rodin, in a firmer voice, "or was going to tell you, that the very day after that on which I informed you of the treachery practised against you, I was myself the victim of a frightful deception. An adopted son—a poor unfortunate child, whom I had brought up——" He paused again, drew his trembling hand over his eyes, and added: "Pardon me, sir, for speaking of matters which must be indifferent to you. Excuse the intrusive sorrow of a poor, broken-hearted old man!"

"I have suffered too much myself, sir, to be indifferent to any kind of sorrow," replied Hardy. "Besides, you are no stranger to me—for you did me a real service—and we both agree in our veneration for the same young priest."

"The Abbé Gabriel!" cried Rodin, interrupting Hardy; "ah, sir! he is my deliverer, my benefactor. If you knew all his care and devotion, during my long illness, caused by intense grief—if you knew the ineffable sweetness of his counsels——"

"I know them, sir," cried Hardy; "oh, yes! I know how salutary is the influence."

"In his mouth, sir, the precepts of religion are full of mildness," resumed Rodin, with excitement. "Do they not heal and console? do they not make us love and hope, instead of fear and tremble?"

"Alas, sir! in this very house," said Hardy, "I have been able to make the comparison."

"I was happy enough," said Rodin, "to have the angelic Abbé Gabriel for my confessor, or, rather, my confidant."

"Yes," replied Hardy, "for he prefers confidence to confession."

"How well you know him!" said Rodin, in a tone of the utmost simplicity. Then he resumed: "He is not a man, but an angel. His words would convert the most hardened sinner. Without being exactly impious, I had myself lived in the profession of what is called Natural Religion; but the angelic Abbé Gabriel has, by degrees, fixed my wavering belief, given it body and soul, and, in fact, endowed me with faith."

"Yes! he is a truly Christian priest—a priest of love and pardon!" cried Hardy.

"What you say is perfectly true," replied Rodin; "for I came here almost mad with grief, thinking only of the unhappy boy who had repaid my paternal goodness with the most monstrous ingratitude, and sometimes I yielded to violent bursts of despair, and sometimes sank into a state of mournful dejection, cold as the grave itself. But, suddenly, the Abbé Gabriel appeared—and the darkness fled before the dawning of a new day."

"You were right, sir; there are strange coincidences," said Hardy, yielding more and more to the feeling of confidence and sympathy, produced by the resemblance of his real position to Rodin's pretended one. "And to speak frankly," he added, "I am very glad I have seen you before quitting this house. Were I capable of falling back into fits of cowardly weakness, your example alone would prevent me. Since I listen to you, I feel myself stronger in the noble path which the angelic Abbé Gabriel has opened before me, as you so well express it."

"The poor old man will not then regret having listened to the first impulse of his heart, which urged him to come to you," said Rodin, with a touching expression. "You will sometimes remember me in that world to which you are returning?"

"Be sure of it, sir; but allow me to ask one question: You remain, you say, in this house?"

"What would you have me do? There reigns here a calm repose, and one is not disturbed in one's prayers," said Rodin, in a very gentle tone. "You see, I have suffered so much—the conduct of that unhappy youth was so horrible—he plunged into such shocking excesses—that the wrath of heaven must be kindled against him. Now I am very old, and it is only by passing the few days that are left me in fervent prayer that I can hope to disarm the just anger of the Lord. Oh! prayer—prayer! It was the Abbé Gabriel who revealed to me all its power and sweetness—and therewith the formidable duties it imposes."

"Its duties are indeed great and sacred," answered Hardy, with a pensive air.

"Do you remember the life of Rancey?" said Rodin, abruptly, as he darted a peculiar glance at Hardy.

"The founder of La Trappe?" said Hardy, surprised at Rodin's question. "I remember hearing a very vague account, some time ago, of the motives of his conversion."

"There is, mark you, no more striking an example of the power of prayer, and of the state of almost divine ecstasy, to which it may lead a religious soul. In a few words, I will relate to you this instructive and tragic history. Rancey—but I beg your pardon; I fear I am trespassing on your time."

"No, no," answered Hardy, hastily; "you cannot think how interested I am in what you tell me. My interview with the Abbé Gabriel was abruptly broken off, and in listening to you I fancy that I hear the further development of his views. Go on, I conjure you."

"With all my heart. I only wish that the instruction which, thanks to our angelic priest, I derived from the story of Rancey might be as profitable to you as it was to me."

"This, then, also came from the Abbé Gabriel?"

"He related to me this kind of parable in support of his exhortations," replied Rodin. "Oh, sir! do I not owe to the consoling words of that young priest all that has strengthened and revived my poor old broken heart?"

"Then I shall listen to you with a double interest."

"Rancey was a man of the world," resumed Rodin, as he looked attentively at Hardy; "a gentleman—young, ardent, handsome. He loved a young lady of high rank. I cannot tell what impediments stood in the way of their union. But this love, though successful, was kept secret, and every evening Rancey visited his mistress by means of a private staircase. It was, they say, one of those passionate loves which men feel but once in their lives. The mystery, even the sacrifice made by the unfortunate girl, who forgot every duty, seemed to give new charms to this guilty passion. In the silence and darkness of secrecy, these two lovers passed two years of voluptuous delirium, which amounted almost to ecstasy."

At these words Hardy started. For the first time of late his brow was suffused with a deep blush; his heart throbbed violently; he remembered that he too had once known the ardent intoxication of a guilty and hidden love. Though the day was closing rapidly, Rodin cast a sidelong glance at Hardy, and perceived the impression he had made. "Sometimes," he continued, "thinking of the dangers to which his mistress was exposed, if their connection should be discovered, Rancey wished to sever these delicious ties; but the girl, beside herself with passion, threw herself on the neck of her lover, and threatened him, in the language of intense excitement, to reveal and to brave all, if he thought of

leaving her. Too weak and loving to resist the prayers of his mistress, Rancey again and again yielded, and they both gave themselves up to a torrent of delight, which carried them along, forgetful of earth and heaven!"

M. Hardy listened to Rodin with feverish and devouring avidity. The Jesuit, in painting, with these almost sensual colors, an ardent and secret love, revived in Hardy burning memories, which till now had been drowned in tears. To the beneficent calm produced by the mild language of Gabriel had succeeded a painful agitation, which, mingled with the reaction of the shocks received that day, began to throw his mind into a strange state of confusion.

Rodin, having so far succeeded in his object, continued as follows: "A fatal day came at last. Rancey, obliged to go to the wars, quitted the girl; but, after a short campaign, he returned, more in love than ever. He had written privately, to say he would arrive almost immediately after his letter. He came accordingly. It was night. He ascended, as usual, the private staircase which led to the chamber of his mistress; he entered the room, his heart beating with love and hope. His mistress had died that morning!"

"Ah!" cried Hardy, covering his face with his hands, in terror.

"She was dead," resumed Rodin. "Two wax-candles were burning beside the funeral couch. Rancey could not, would not believe that she was dead. He threw himself on his knees by the corpse. In his delirium, he seized that fair, beloved head, to cover it with kisses. The head parted from the body, and remained in his hands! Yes," resumed Rodin, as Hardy drew back, pale and mute with terror, "yes, the girl had fallen a victim to so swift and extraordinary a disease, that she had not been able to receive the last sacraments. After her death, the doctors, in the hope of discovering the cause of this unknown malady, had begun to dissect that fair form——"

As Rodin reached this part of his narrative, night was almost come. A sort of hazy twilight alone reigned in this silent chamber, in the centre of which appeared the pale and ghastly form of Rodin, clad in his long black gown, whilst his eyes seemed to sparkle with diabolic fire. Overcome by the violent emotions occasioned by this story, in which thoughts of death and voluptuousness, love and horror, were so strangely mingled, Hardy remained fixed and motionless, waiting for the words of Rodin, with a combination of curiosity, anguish and alarm.

"And Rancey?" said he, at last, in an agitated voice, whilst he wiped the cold sweat from his brow.

"After two days of furious delirium," resumed Rodin, "he renounced the world, and shut himself up in impenetrable solitude. The first period of his retreat was frightful; in his despair, he uttered loud yells of grief and rage, that were audible at some distance. Twice he attempted suicide, to escape from the terrible visions."

"He had visions, then?" said Hardy, with an increased agony of curiosity.

"Yes," replied Rodin, in a solemn tone, "he had fearful visions. He saw the girl who, for his sake, had died in mortal sin, plunged in the heat of the everlasting flames of hell! On that fair face, disfigured by infernal tortures, was stamped the despairing laugh of the damned! Her teeth gnashed with pain; her arms writhed in anguish! She wept tears of blood, and, with an agonized and avenging voice, she cried to her seducer: 'Thou art the cause of my perdition—my curse, my curse be upon thee!'"

As he pronounced these last words, Rodin advanced three steps nearer to Hardy, accompanying each step with a menacing gesture. If we remember the state of weakness, trouble, and fear, in which M. Hardy was—if we remember that the Jesuit had just roused in the soul of this unfortunate man all the sensual and spiritual memories of a love, cooled, but not extinguished, in tears—if we remember, too, that Hardy reproached himself with the seduction of a beloved object, whom her departure from her duties might (according to the Catholic faith) doom to everlasting flames—we shall not wonder at the terrible effect of this phantasmagoria, conjured up in silence and solitude, in the evening dusk, by this fearful priest.

The effect on Hardy was indeed striking, and the more dangerous, that the Jesuit, with diabolical craft, seemed only to be carrying out, from another point of view, the ideas of Gabriel. Had not the young priest convinced Hardy that nothing is sweeter, than to ask of heaven forgiveness for those who have sinned, or whom we have led astray? But forgiveness implies punishment; and it was to the punishment alone that Rodin drew the attention of his victim, by painting it in these terrific hues. With hands clasped together, and eye fixed and dilated, Hardy trembled in all his limbs, and seemed still listening to Rodin, though the latter had ceased to speak. Mechanically, he repeated: "My curse, my curse be upon thee!"

Then suddenly he exclaimed, in a kind of frenzy: "The curse is on me also! The woman, whom I taught to forget her sacred duties, and to commit mortal sin—one day—plunged in the everlasting flames—her arms writhing in agony—weeping tears of blood—will cry to me from the bottomless pit: 'My curse, my curse be upon thee!'—One day," he added, with redoubled terror, "one day?—who knows? perhaps at this moment!—for if the sea voyage had been fatal to her—if a shipwreck—oh, God! she too would have died in mortal sin—lost, lost, forever!—Oh, have mercy on her, my God! Crush me in Thy wrath—but have mercy on her—for I alone am guilty!"

And the unfortunate man, almost delirious, sank with clasped hands upon the ground.

"Sir," cried Rodin, in an affectionate voice, as he hastened to lift him up, "my dear sir—my dear friend—be calm! Comfort yourself. I cannot bear to see you despond. Alas! my intention was quite the contrary to that."

"The curse! the curse! yes, she will curse me also—she, that I loved so much—in the everlasting flames!" murmured Hardy, shuddering, and apparently insensible to the other's words.

"But, my dear sir, listen to me, I entreat you," resumed the latter; "let me finish my story, and then you will find it as consoling as it now seems terrible. For heaven's sake, remember the adorable words of our angelic Abbé Gabriel, with regard to the sweetness of prayer."

At the name of Gabriel, Hardy recovered himself a little, and exclaimed, in a heart-rending tone: "Ay! his words were sweet and beneficent. Where are they now? For mercy's sake, repeat to me those consoling words."

"Our angelic Abbé Gabriel," resumed Rodin, "spoke to you of the sweetness of prayer——"

"Oh, yes! prayer!"

"Well, my dear sir, listen to me, and you shall see how prayer saved Rancey, and made a saint of him. Yes, these frightful torments, that I have just described, these threatening visions, were all conquered by prayer, and changed into celestial delights."

"I beg of you," said Hardy, in a faint voice, "speak to me of Gabriel, speak to me of heaven—but no more flames—no more hell—where sinful women weep tears of blood——"

"No, no," replied Rodin; and even as, in describing hell, his tone had been harsh and threatening, it now became warm and tender, as he uttered the following words: "No;

we will have no more images of despair—for, as I have told you, after suffering infernal tortures, Rancey, thanks to the power of prayer, enjoyed the delights of paradise."

"The delights of paradise?" repeated Hardy, listening with anxious attention.

"One day, at the height of his grief, a priest, a good priest—another Abbé Gabriel—came to Rancey. Oh, happiness! oh, providential change! In a few days, he taught the sufferer the sacred mysteries of prayer—that pious intercession of the creature, addressed to the Creator, in favor of a soul exposed to the wrath of heaven. Then Rancey seemed transformed. His grief was at once appeased. He prayed; and the more he prayed, the greater was his hope. He felt that God listened to his prayer. Instead of trying to forget his beloved, he now thought of her constantly, and prayed for her salvation. Happy in his obscure cell, alone with that adored remembrance, he passed days and nights in praying for her—plunged in an ineffable, burning, I had almost said amorous ecstasy."

It is impossible to give an idea of the tone of almost sensual energy with which Rodin pronounced the word "amorous." Hardy started, changing from hot to cold. For the first time, his weakened mind caught a glimpse of the fatal pleasures of asceticism, and of that deplorable catalepsy, described in the lives of St. Theresa, St. Aubierge, and others.

Rodin perceived the other's thoughts, and continued: "Oh! Rancey was not now the man to content himself with a vague, passing prayer, uttered in the whirl of the world's business, which swallows it up, and prevents it from reaching the ear of heaven. No, no; in the depths of solitude, he endeavored to make his prayers even more efficacious, so ardently did he desire the eternal salvation of his mistress."

"What did he do then—oh! what did he do in his solitude?" cried Hardy, who was now powerless in the hands of the Jesuit.

"First of all," said Rodin, with a slight emphasis, "he became a monk."

"A monk!" repeated Hardy, with a pensive air.

"Yes," resumed Rodin, "he became a monk, because his prayers were thus more likely to be favorably accepted. And then, as in solitude our thoughts are apt to wander, he fasted, and mortified his flesh, and brought into subjection all that was carnal within him, so that, becoming all spirit, his prayers might issue like a pure flame from his bosom,

and ascend like the perfume of incense to the throne of the Most High!"

"Oh! what a delicious dream!" cried Hardy, more and more under the influence of the spell; "to pray for the woman we have adored, and to become spirit—perfume—light!"

"Yes; spirit, perfume, light!" said Rodin, with emphasis. "But it is no dream. How many monks, how many hermits, like Rancey, have, by prayers, and austerity, and macerations, attained a divine ecstasy! and if you only knew the celestial pleasures of such ecstasies!—Thus, after he became a monk, the terrible dreams were succeeded by enchanting visions. Many times, after a day of fasting, and a night passed in prayers and macerations, Rancey sank down exhausted on the floor of his cell! Then the spirit freed itself from the vile clogs of matter. His senses were absorbed in pleasure; the sound of heavenly harmony struck upon his ravished ear; a bright, mild light, which was not of this world, dawned upon his half-closed eyes; and, at the height of the melodious vibrations of the golden harps of the Seraphim, in the centre of a glory, compared to which the sun is pale, the monk beheld the image of that beloved woman ——"

"Whom by his prayers he had at length rescued from the eternal flames?" said Hardy, in a trembling voice.

"Yes, herself," replied Rodin, with eloquent enthusiasm, for this monster was skilled in every style of speech. "Thanks to the prayers of her lover, which the Lord had granted, this woman no longer shed tears of blood—no longer writhed her beautiful arms in the convulsions of infernal anguish. No, no; still fair—oh! a thousand times fairer than when she dwelt on earth—fair with the everlasting beauty of angels—she smiled on her lover with ineffable ardor, and, her eyes beaming with a mild radiance, she said to him in a tender and passionate voice: 'Glory to the Lord! glory to thee, O my beloved! Thy prayers and austerities have saved me. I am numbered amongst the chosen. Thanks, my beloved, and glory!'—And therewith, radiant in her felicity, she stooped to kiss, with lips fragrant with immortality, the lips of the enraptured monk—and their souls mingled in that kiss, burning as love, chaste as divine grace, immense as eternity!"

"Oh!" cried Hardy, completely beside himself; "a whole life of prayer, fasting, torture, for such a moment—with her, whom I mourn—with her, whom I have perhaps led to perdition!"

"What do you say? such a moment!" cried Rodin, whose

yellow forehead was bathed in sweat like that of a magnetizer, and who now took Hardy by the hand, and drew still closer, as if to breathe into him the burning delirium; "it was not once in his religious life—it was almost every day, that Rancey, plunged in divine ecstasy, enjoyed these delicious, ineffable, superhuman pleasures, which are to the pleasures of earth what eternity is to man's existence!"

Seeing, no doubt, that Hardy was now at the point to which he wished to bring him, and the night being almost entirely come, the reverend father coughed two or three times in a significant manner, and looked towards the door. At this moment, Hardy, in the height of his frenzy, exclaimed, with a supplicating voice: "A cell—a tomb—and the Ecstatic Vision!"

The door of the room opened, and Father d'Aigrigny entered, with a cloak under his arm. A servant followed him, bearing a light.

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About ten minutes after this scene, a dozen robust men, with frank, open countenances, led by Agricola, entered the Rue de Vaugirard, and advanced joyously towards the house of the reverend fathers. It was a deputation from the former workmen of M. Hardy. They came to escort him, and to congratulate him on his return amongst them. Agricola walked at their head. Suddenly he saw a carriage with post-horses issuing from the gateway of the house. The postilion whipped up the horses, and they started at full gallop. Was it chance or instinct? The nearer the carriage approached the group of which he formed a part, the more did Agricola's heart sink within him.

The impression became so vivid that it was soon changed into a terrible apprehension; and at the moment when the vehicle, which had its blinds down, was about to pass close by him, the smith, in obedience to a resistless impulse, exclaimed, as he rushed to the horses' heads: "Help, friends! stop them!"

"P'ostilion! ten louis if you ride over him!" cried from the carriage the military voice of Father d'Aigrigny.

The cholera was still raging. The postilion had heard of the murder of the poisoners. Already frightened at the sudden attack of Agricola, he struck him a heavy blow on the head with the butt of his whip which stretched him senseless on the ground. Then, spurring with all his might, he urged his three horses into a triple gallop, and

the carriage rapidly disappeared, whilst Agricola's companions, who had neither understood his actions nor the sense of his words, crowded around the smith, and did their best to revive him.

CHAPTER XLIV.

REMEMBRANCES.

Other events took place a few days after the fatal evening in which M. Hardy, fascinated and misled by the deplorable, mystic jargon of Rodin, had implored Father d'Aigrigny on his knees to remove him far from Paris, into some deep solitude where he might devote himself to a life of prayer and ascetic austerities. Marshal Simon, since his arrival in Paris, had occupied, with his two daughters, a house in the Rue des Trois-Frères. Before introducing the reader into this modest dwelling, we are obliged to recall to his memory some preceding facts. The day of the burning of Hardy's factory, Marshal Simon had come to consult with his father on a question of the highest importance, and to communicate to him his painful apprehensions on the subject of the growing sadness of his twin daughters, which he was unable to explain.

Marshal Simon held in religious reverence the memory of the Great Emperor. His gratitude to the hero was boundless, his devotion blind, his enthusiasm founded upon reason, his affection warm as the most sincere and passionate friendship. But this was not all.

One day the emperor, in a burst of joy and paternal tenderness, had led the marshal to the cradle of the sleeping King of Rome, and said to him, as he proudly pointed to the beautiful child: "My old friend, swear to me that you will serve the son as you have served the father!"

Marshal Simon took and kept that vow. During the Restoration, the chief of a military conspiracy in favor of Napoleon II., he had attempted in vain to secure a regiment of cavalry, at that time commanded by the Marquis d'Aigrigny. Betrayed and denounced, the marshal, after a desperate duel with the future Jesuit, had succeeded in reaching Poland, and thus escaping a sentence of death. It is useless to repeat the series of events which led the marshal from Poland to India, and then brought him back to Paris after the Revolution of July—an epoch at which a number

of his old comrades in arms had solicited and obtained from the government, without his knowledge, the confirmation of the rank and title which the emperor had bestowed upon him just before Waterloo.

On his return to Paris, after his long exile, in spite of all the happiness he felt in at length embracing his children, Marshal Simon was deeply affected on learning the death of their mother, whom he adored. Till the last moment, he had hoped to find her in Paris. The disappointment was dreadful, and he felt it cruelly, though he sought consolation in his children's affection.

But soon new causes of trouble and anxiety were interwoven with his life by the machinations of Rodin. Thanks to the secret intrigues of the reverend father at the Courts of Rome and Vienna, one of his emissaries, in a condition to inspire full confidence, and provided with undeniable evidence to support his words, went to Marshal Simon, and said to him: "The son of the emperor is dying, the victim of the fears with which the name of Napoleon still inspires Europe."

"From this slow expiring, you, Marshal Simon, one of the emperor's most faithful friends, are able to rescue this unfortunate prince.

"The correspondence in my hand proves that it would be easy to open relations, of the surest and most secret nature, with one of the most influential persons about the King of Rome, and this person would be disposed to favor the prince's escape.

"It is possible, by a bold, unexpected stroke, to deliver Napoleon II. from the custody of Austria, which would leave him to perish by inches in an atmosphere that is fatal to him.

"The enterprise may be a rash one, but it has chances of success that you, Marshal Simon, more than any other, could change into certainties; for your devotion to the emperor is well known, and we remember with what adventurous audacity you conspired, in 1815, in favor of Napoleon II."

The state of languor and decline of the King of Rome was then in France a matter of public notoriety. People even went so far as to affirm that the son of the hero was carefully trained by priests, who kept him in complete ignorance of the glory of his paternal name; and that, by the most execrable machinations, they strove day by day to extinguish every noble and generous instinct that displayed itself in the

unfortunate youth. The coldest hearts were touched and softened at the story of so sad and fatal a destiny. When we remember the heroic character and chivalrous loyalty of Marshal Simon, and his passionate devotion to the emperor, we can understand how the father of Rose and Blanche was more interested than any one else in the fate of the young prince, and how, if occasion offered, he would feel himself obliged not to confine his efforts to mere regrets. With regard to the reality of the correspondence produced by Rodin's emissary, it had been submitted by the marshal to a searching test, by means of his intimacy with one of his old companions in arms, who had been for a long period on a mission to Vienna, in the time of the empire. The result of this investigation, conducted with as much prudence as address, so that nothing should transpire, showed that the marshal might give his serious attention to the advances made him.

Hence, this proposition threw the father of Rose and Blanche into a cruel perplexity; for, to attempt so bold and dangerous an enterprise, he must once more abandon his children; whilst, on the contrary, if, alarmed at this separation, he renounced the endeavor to save the King of Rome, whose lingering death was perfectly true and well authenticated, the marshal would consider himself as false to the vow he had sworn to the emperor. To end these painful hesitations, full of confidence in the inflexible uprightness of his father's character, the marshal had gone to ask his advice; unfortunately, the old republican workman, mortally wounded during the attack on M. Hardy's factory, but still pondering over the serious communication of his son, died with these words upon his lips: "My son, you have a great duty to perform, under pain of not acting like a man of honor, and of disobeying my last will. You must, without hesitation——"

But, by a deplorable fatality, the last words, which would have completed the sense of the old workman's thought, were spoken in so feeble a voice as to be quite unintelligible. He died, leaving Marshal Simon in a worse state of anxiety, as one of the two courses open to him had now been formally condemned by his father, in whose judgment he had the most implicit and merited confidence. In a word, his mind was now tortured by the doubt whether his father had intended, in the name of honor and duty, to advise him not to abandon his children, to engage in so hazardous an enterprise, or whether, on the contrary, he had wished him to

leave them for a time, to perform the vow made to the emperor, and endeavor at least to rescue Napoleon II. from a captivity that might soon be mortal.

This perplexity, rendered more cruel by certain circumstances, to be related hereafter, the tragical death of his father, who had expired in his arms; the incessant and painful remembrance of his wife, who had perished in a land of exile; and finally, the grief he felt at perceiving the ever-growing sadness of Rose and Blanche, occasioned severe shocks to Marshal Simon. Let us add that, in spite of his natural intrepidity, so nobly proved by twenty years of war, the ravages of the cholera, the same terrible malady to which his wife had fallen a victim in Siberia, filled the marshal with involuntary dread. Yes, this man of iron nerves, who had coolly braved death in so many battles, felt the habitual firmness of his character give way at sight of the scenes of desolation and mourning which Paris offered at every step. Yet, when Mdlle. de Cardoville gathered round her the members of her family, to warn them against the plot of their enemies, the affectionate tenderness of Adrienne for Rose and Blanche appeared to exercise so happy an influence on their mysterious sorrow, that the marshal, forgetting for a moment his fatal regrets, thought only of enjoying this blessed change, which, alas! was but of short duration. Having now recalled these facts to the mind of the reader, we shall continue our story.

CHAPTER XLV.

THE BLOCKHEAD.

We have stated that Marshal Simon occupied a small house in the Rue des Trois-Frères. Two o'clock in the afternoon had just struck in the marshal's sleeping-chamber, a room furnished with military simplicity. In the recess, in which stood the bed, hung a trophy composed of the arms used by the marshal during his campaigns. On the secretary opposite was a small bronze bust of the emperor, the only ornament of the apartment. Out of doors the temperature was far from warm, and the marshal had become susceptible to cold during his long residence in India. A good fire therefore blazed upon the hearth. A door, concealed by the hangings, and leading to a back staircase, opened slowly, and a man entered the chamber. He carried a basket of

wood, and advanced leisurely to the fireplace, before which he knelt down, and began to arrange the logs symmetrically in a box that stood beside the hearth. After some minutes occupied in this manner, still kneeling, he gradually approached another door, at a little distance from the chimney, and appeared to listen with deep attention, as if he wished to hear what was passing in the next room.

This man, employed as an inferior servant in the house, had the most ridiculously stupid look that can be imagined. His functions consisted in carrying wood, running errands, etc. In other respects he was a kind of laughing-stock to the other servants. In a moment of good humor, Dagobert, who filled the post of major-domo, had given this idiot the name of "Loony" (lunatic), which he had retained ever since, and which he deserved in every respect, as well for his awkwardness and folly as for his unmeaning face, with its grotesquely flat nose, sloping chin, and wide, staring eyes. Add to this description a jacket of red stuff, and a triangular white apron, and we must acknowledge that the simpleton was quite worthy of his name.

Yet, at the moment when Loony listened so attentively at the door of the adjoining room, a ray of quick intelligence animated for an instant his dull and stupid countenance.

When he had thus listened for a short time, Loony returned to the fireplace, still crawling on his knees; then rising, he again took his basket half full of wood, and once more approaching the door at which he had listened, knocked discreetly. No one answered. He knocked a second time, and more loudly. Still there was the same silence.

Then he said, in a harsh, squeaking, laughable voice: "Ladies, do you want any wood, if you please, for your fire?"

Receiving no answer, Loony placed his basket on the ground, opened the door gently, and entered the next room, after casting a rapid glance around. He came out again in a few seconds, looking from side to side with an anxious air, like a man who had just accomplished some important and mysterious task.

Taking up his basket, he was about to leave Marshal Simon's room, when the door of the private staircase was opened slowly and with precaution, and Dagobert appeared.

The soldier, evidently surprised at the servant's presence, knitted his brows, and exclaimed abruptly, "What are you doing here?"

At this sudden interrogation, accompanied by a growl ex-

pressive of the ill-humor of Spoil-sport, who followed close on his master's heels, Loony uttered a cry of real or pretended terror. To give, perhaps, an appearance of greater reality to his dread, the supposed simpleton let his basket fall on the ground, as if astonishment and fear had loosened his hold of it.

"What are you doing, numbskull?" resumed Dagobert, whose countenance was impressed with deep sadness, and who seemed little disposed to laugh at the fellow's stupidity.

"Oh, M. Dagobert! how you frighten me! Dear me! what a pity I had not an armful of plates, to prove it was not my fault if I broke them all."

"I ask you what you are doing," resumed the soldier.

"You see, M. Dagobert," replied Loony, pointing to his basket, "that I came with some wood to master's room, so that he might burn it, if it was cold—which it is."

"Very well. Pick up your wood, and begone!"

"Oh, M. Dagobert! my legs tremble under me. How you did scare me, to be sure!"

"Will you begone, brute?" resumed the veteran; and seizing Loony by the arm, he pushed him towards the door, while Spoil-sport, with recumbent ears, and hair standing up like the quills of a porcupine, seemed inclined to accelerate his retreat.

"I am going, M. Dagobert, I am going," replied the simpleton, as he hastily gathered up his basket; "only please to tell the dog——"

"Go to the devil, you stupid chatterbox!" cried Dagobert, as he pushed Loony through the doorway.

Then the soldier bolted the door which led to the private staircase, and going to that which communicated with the apartments of the two sisters, he double-locked it. Having done this, he hastened to the alcove in which stood the bed, and taking down a pair of loaded pistols, he carefully removed the percussion caps, and, unable to repress a deep sigh, restored the weapons to the place in which he had found them. Then, as if on second thoughts, he took down an Indian dagger with a very sharp blade, and drawing it from its silver-gilt sheath, proceeded to break the point of this murderous instrument, by twisting it beneath one of the iron castors of the bed.

Dagobert then proceeded to unfasten the two doors, and, returning slowly to the marble chimney-piece, he leaned against it with a gloomy and pensive air. Crouching before

the fire, Spoil-sport followed with an attentive eye the least movement of his master. The good dog displayed a rare and intelligent sagacity. The soldier, having drawn out his handkerchief, let fall, without perceiving it, a paper containing a roll of tobacco. Spoil-sport, who had all the qualities of a retriever of the Rutland race, took the paper between his teeth, and, rising upon his hind-legs, presented it respectfully to Dagobert. But the latter received it mechanically, and appeared indifferent to the dexterity of his dog. The grenadier's countenance revealed as much sorrow as anxiety. After remaining for some minutes near the fire, with fixed and meditative look, he began to walk about the room in great agitation, one of his hands thrust into the bosom of his long blue frock-coat, which was buttoned up to the chin, and the other into one of his hind-pockets.

From time to time he stopped abruptly, and seemed to make reply to his own thoughts, or uttered an exclamation of doubt and uneasiness; then, turning towards the trophy of arms, he shook his head mournfully, and murmured, "No matter—this fear may be idle; but he has acted so extraordinarily these two days, that it is at all events more prudent——"

He continued his walk, and said, after a new and prolonged silence: "Yes, he must tell me. It makes me too uneasy. And then the poor children—it is enough to break one's heart."

And Dagobert hastily drew his moustache between his thumb and forefinger, a nervous movement, which with him was an evident symptom of extreme agitation. Some minutes after, the soldier resumed, still answering his inward thoughts: "What can it be? It is hardly possible to be the letters, they are too infamous; he despises them. And yet—— But no, no—he is above that!"

And Dagobert again began to walk with hasty steps. Suddenly, Spoil-sport pricked up his ears, turned his head in the direction of the staircase door, and growled hoarsely. A few seconds after, some one knocked at the door.

"Who is there?" said Dagobert. There was no answer, but the person knocked again. Losing patience, the soldier went hastily to open it, and saw the servant's stupid face.

"Why don't you answer, when I ask who knocks!" said the soldier, angrily.

"M. Dagobert, you sent me away just now, and I was afraid of making you cross, if I said I had come again."

"What do you want? Speak then—come in, stupid!" cried the exasperated Dagobert, as he pulled him into the room.

"M. Dagobert, don't be angry—I'll tell you all about it—it is a young man."

"Well?"

"He wants to speak to you directly, M. Dagobert."

"His name?"

"His name, M. Dagobert?" replied Loony, rolling about and laughing with an idiotic air.

"Yes, his name. Speak, idiot!"

"Oh, M. Dagobert! it's all in joke that you ask me his name!"

"You are determined, fool that you are, to drive me out of my senses!" cried the soldier, seizing Loony by the collar. "The name of this young man!"

"Don't be angry, M. Dagobert. I didn't tell you the name, because you know it."

"Beast!" said Dagobert, shaking his fist at him.

"Yes, you do know it, M. Dagobert, for the young man is your own son. He is downstairs, and wants to speak to you directly—yes, directly."

The stupidity was so well assumed, that Dagobert was the dupe of it. Moved to compassion rather than anger by such imbecility, he looked fixedly at the servant, shrugged his shoulders, and said, as he advanced towards the staircase, "Follow me!"

Loony obeyed; but, before closing the door, he drew a letter secretly from his pocket, and dropped it behind him without turning his head, saying all the while to Dagobert, for the purpose of occupying his attention: "Your son is in the court, M. Dagobert. He would not come up—that's why he is still downstairs!"

Thus talking, he closed the door, believing he had left the letter on the floor of Marshal Simon's room. But he had reckoned without Spoil-sport. Whether he thought it more prudent to bring up the rear, or, from respectful deference for a biped, the worthy dog had been the last to leave the room, and, being a famous carrier, as soon as he saw the letter dropped by Loony, he took it delicately between his teeth, and followed close on the heels of the servant, without the latter perceiving this new proof of the intelligence and sagacity of Spoil-sport.

CHAPTER XLVI.

THE ANONYMOUS LETTERS.

We will explain presently what became of the letter, which Spoil-sport held between his teeth, and why he left his master, when the latter ran to meet Agricola. Dagobert had not seen his son for some days. Embracing him cordially, he led him into one of the rooms on the ground-floor, which he usually occupied. "And how is your wife?" said the soldier to his son.

"She is well, father, thank you."

Perceiving a great change in Agricola's countenance, Dagobert resumed: "You look sad. Has anything gone wrong since I saw you last?"

"All is over, father. We have lost him," said the smith, in a tone of despair.

"Lost whom?"

"M. Hardy."

"M. Hardy!—why, three days ago, you told me you were going to see him."

"Yes, father, I have seen him—and my dear brother Gabriel saw him and spoke to him—how he speaks! with a voice that comes from the heart!—and he had so revived and encouraged him, that M. Hardy consented to return amongst us. Then I, wild with joy, ran to tell the good news to some of my mates, who were waiting to hear the result of my interview with M. Hardy. I brought them all with me to thank and bless him. We were within a hundred yards of the house belonging to the black-gowns——"

"Ah, the black-gowns!" said Dagobert, with a gloomy air. "Then some mischief will happen. I know them."

"You are not mistaken, father," answered Agricola, with a sigh. "I was running on with my comrades, when I saw a carriage coming towards us. Some presentiment told me that they were taking away M. Hardy."

"By force!" said Dagobert, hastily.

"No," answered Agricola, bitterly; "no—the priests are too cunning for that. They know how to make you an accomplice in the evil they do you. Shall I not always remember how they managed with my good mother?"

"Yes, the worthy woman! there was a poor fly caught in the spider's web. But this carriage, of which you speak?"

"On seeing it start from the house of the black-gowns," replied Agricola, "my heart sank within me; and, by an impulse stronger than myself, I rushed to the horses' heads, calling on my comrades to help me. But the postilion knocked me down and stunned me with a blow from his whip. When I recovered my senses, the carriage was already far away."

"You were not hurt?" cried Dagobert, anxiously, as he examined his son from top to toe.

"No, father; a mere scratch."

"What did you next, my boy?"

"I hastened to our good angel, Mdlle. de Cardoville, and told her all. 'You must follow M. Hardy on the instant,' said she to me. 'Take my carriage and post-horses. Dupont will accompany you; follow M. Hardy from stage to stage; should you succeed in overtaking him, your presence and your prayers may perhaps conquer the fatal influence that these priests have acquired over him.'"

"It was the best advice she could give you. That excellent young lady is always right."

"An hour after, we were upon our way, for we learned by the returned postilions, that M. Hardy had taken the Orleans road. We followed him as far as Etampes. There we heard that he had taken a cross-road, to reach a solitary house in a valley about four leagues from the highway. They told us that this house, called the Val-de-St. Hérem, belonged to certain priests, and that, as the night was so dark, and the road so bad, we had better sleep at the inn, and start early in the morning. We followed this advice, and set out at dawn. In a quarter of an hour, we quitted the high-road for a mountainous and desert track. We saw nothing but brown rocks, and a few birch trees. As we advanced, the scene became wilder and wilder. We might have fancied ourselves a hundred leagues from Paris. At last we stopped in front of a large, old, black-looking house with only a few small windows in it, and built at the foot of a high, rocky mountain. In my whole life I have never seen anything so deserted and sad. We got out of the carriage, and I rang the bell. A man opened the door. 'Did not the Abbé d'Aigrigny arrive here last night with a gentleman?' said I to this man, with a confidential air. 'Inform the gentleman directly, that I come on business of importance, and that I must see him forthwith.'—The man,

believing me an accomplice, showed us in immediately; a moment after, the Abbé d'Aigrigny opened the door, saw me, and drew back; yet, in five minutes more, I was in presence of M. Hardy."

"Well!" said Dagobert, with interest.

Agricola shook his head sorrowfully, and replied: "I knew by the very countenance of M. Hardy, that all was over. Addressing me in a mild but firm voice, he said to me: 'I understand, I can even excuse, the motives that bring you hither. But I am quite determined to live henceforth in solitude and prayer. I take this resolution freely and voluntarily, because I would fain provide for the salvation of my soul. Tell your fellows that my arrangements will be such as to leave them a good remembrance of me.' —And as I was about to speak, M. Hardy interrupted me, saying: 'It is useless, my friend. My determination is unalterable. Do not write to me, for your letters would remain unanswered. Prayer will henceforth be my only occupation. Excuse me for leaving you, but I am fatigued from my journey!'—He spoke the truth for he was as pale as a spectre, with a kind of wildness about the eyes, and so changed since the day before, as to be hardly the same man. His hand, when he offered it on parting from me, was dry and burning. The Abbé d'Aigrigny soon came in. 'Father,' said M. Hardy to him, 'have the goodness to see M. Baudoin to the door.'—So saying, he waved his hand to me in token of farewell, and retired to the next chamber. All was over; he is lost to us forever."

"Yes," said Dagobert, "those black-gowns have enchanted him, like so many others."

"In despair," resumed Agricola, "I returned hither with M. Dupont. This, then, is what the priests have made of M. Hardy—of that generous man, who supported nearly three hundred industrious workmen in order and happiness, increasing their knowledge, improving their hearts, and earning the benediction of that little people, of which he was the providence. Instead of all this, M. Hardy is now forever reduced to a gloomy and unavailing life of contemplation."

"Oh, the black-gowns!" said Dagobert, shuddering, and unable to conceal a vague sense of fear. "The longer I live, the more I am afraid of them. You have seen what those people did to your poor mother; you see what they have just done to M. Hardy; you know their plots against my two poor orphans, and against that generous

young lady. Oh, these people are very powerful! I would rather face a battalion of Russian grenadiers, than a dozen of these cassocks. But don't let's talk of it. I have causes enough beside for grief and fear."

Then seeing the astonished look of Agricola, the soldier, unable to restrain his emotion, threw himself into the arms of his son, exclaiming with a choking voice: "I can hold out no longer. My heart is too full. I must speak; and whom shall I trust if not you?"

"Father, you frighten me!" said Agricola. "What is the matter?"

"Why, you see, had it not been for you and the two poor girls, I should have blown out my brains twenty times over rather than see what I see—and dread what I do."

"What do you dread, father?"

"Since the last few days, I do not know what has come over the marshal—but he frightens me."

"Yet in his last interviews with Mdlle. de Cardoville——"

"Yes, he was a little better. By her kind words, this generous young lady poured balm into his wounds; the presence of the young Indian cheered him; he appeared to shake off his cares, and his poor little girls felt the benefit of the change. But for some days, I know not what demon has been loosed against this family. It is enough to turn one's head. First of all, I am sure that the anonymous letters have begun again."

"What letters, father?"

"The anonymous letters."

"But what are they about?"

"You know how the marshal hated that renegade, the Abbé d'Aigrigny. When he found that the traitor was here, and that he had persecuted the two orphans, even as he persecuted their mother to the death—but that now he had become a priest—I thought the marshal would have gone mad with indignation and fury. He wished to go in search of the renegade. With one word I calmed him. 'He is a priest,' I said; 'you may do what you will, insult or strike him—he will not fight. He began by serving against his country, he ends by becoming a bad priest. It is all in character. He is not worth spitting upon.'—'But surely I may punish the wrong done to my children, and avenge the death of my wife,' cried the marshal, much exasperated.—'They say, as you well know, that there are courts of law to avenge your wrongs,' answered I;

'Mdlle. de Cardoville has lodged a charge against the renegade, for having attempted to confine your daughters in a convent. We must champ the bit and wait.'"

"Yes," said Agricola, mournfully, "and unfortunately there lacks proof to bring it home to the Abbé d'Aigrigny. The other day, when I was examined by Mdlle. de Cardoville's lawyer, with regard to our attempt on the convent, he told me that we should meet with obstacles at every step, for want of legal evidence, and that the priests had taken their precautions with so much skill that the indictment would be quashed."

"That is just what the marshal thinks, my boy, and this increases his irritation at such injustice."

"He should despise the wretches."

"But the anonymous letters!"

"Well, what of them, father?"

"You shall know all. A brave and honorable man like the marshal, when his first movement of indignation was over, felt that to insult the renegade disguised in the garb of a priest, would be like insulting an old man or a woman. He determined therefore to despise him, and to forget him as soon as possible. But then, almost every day, there came by the post anonymous letters, in which all sorts of devices were employed, to revive and excite the anger of the marshal against the renegade by reminding him of all the evil contrived by the Abbé d'Aigrigny against him and his family. The marshal was reproached with cowardice for not taking vengeance on this priest, the persecutor of his wife and children, the insolent mocker at his misfortunes."

"And from whom do you suspect these letters to come, father?"

"I cannot tell—it is that which turns one's brain. They must come from the enemies of the marshal, and he has no enemies but the black-gowns."

"But, father, since these letters are to excite his anger against the Abbé d'Aigrigny, they can hardly have been written by priests."

"That is what I have said to myself."

"But what, then, can be their object?"

"Their object? oh, it is too plain!" cried Dagobert. "The marshal is hasty, ardent; he has a thousand reasons to desire vengeance on the renegade. But he cannot do himself justice, and the other sort of justice fails him. Then what does he do? He endeavors to forget, he forgets. But every day there comes to him an insolent letter,

to provoke and exasperate his legitimate hatred, by mockeries and insults. Devil take me! my head is not the weakest—but, at such a game, I should go mad."

"Father, such a plot would be horrible, and only worthy of hell!"

"And that is not all."

"What more?"

"The marshal has received other letters; those he has not shown me—but, after he had read the first, he remained like a man struck motionless, and murmured to himself: 'They do not even respect that—oh! it is too much—too much!'—And, hiding his face in his hands he wept."

"The marshal wept!" cried the blacksmith, hardly able to believe what he heard.

"Yes," answered Dagobert, "he wept like a child."

"And what could these letters contain, father?"

"I did not venture to ask him, he appeared so miserable and dejected."

"But thus harassed and tormented incessantly, the marshal must lead a wretched life."

"And his poor little girls too! he sees them grow sadder and sadder, without being able to guess the cause. And the death of his father, killed almost in his arms! Perhaps, you will think all this enough; but, no! I am sure there is something still more painful behind. Lately, you would hardly know the marshal. He is irritable about nothing, and falls into such fits of passion, that——" After a moment's hesitation, the soldier resumed: "I may tell this to you, my poor boy. I have just been upstairs, to take the caps from his pistols."

"What, father!" cried Agricola; "you fear——"

"In the state of exasperation in which I saw him yesterday, there is everything to fear."

"What then happened?"

"Since some time, he has often long secret interviews with a gentleman, who looks like an old soldier and a worthy man. I have remarked that the gloom and agitation of the marshal are always redoubled after one of these visits. Two or three times, I have spoken to him about it; but I saw by his look, that I displeased him, and therefore I desisted.

"Well! yesterday, this gentleman came in the evening. He remained here until eleven o'clock, and his wife came to fetch him, and waited for him in a coach. After his departure, I went up to see if the marshal wanted anything,

He was very pale, but calm; he thanked me, and I came down again. You know that my room is just under his. I could hear the marshal walking about, as if much agitated, and soon after he seemed to be knocking down the furniture. In alarm, I once more went upstairs. He asked me, with an irritated air, what I wanted, and ordered me to leave the room. Seeing him in that way, I remained; he grew more angry, still I remained; perceiving a chair and table thrown down, I pointed to them with so sad an air that he understood me. You know that he has the best heart in the world, so, taking me by the hand, he said to me: 'Forgive me for causing you this uneasiness, my good Dagobert; but just now, I lost my senses, and gave way to a burst of absurd fury; I think I should have thrown myself out of the window, had it been open. I only hope, that my poor dear girls have not heard me,' added he, as he went on tip-toe to open the door which communicates with his daughters' bedroom. When he had listened anxiously for a moment, he returned to me, and said: 'Luckily, they are asleep.'—Then I asked him what was the cause of his agitation, and if, in spite of my precautions, he had received any more anonymous letters. 'No,' replied he, with a gloomy air; 'but leave me, my friend. I am now better. It has done me good to see you. Good-night, old comrade! go downstairs to bed.'—I took care not to contradict him; but, pretending to go down, I came up again, and seated myself on the top stair, listening. No doubt, to calm himself entirely, the marshal went to embrace his children, for I heard him open and shut their door. Then he returned to his room, and walked about for a long time, but with a more quiet step. At last, I heard him throw himself on his bed, and I came down about break of day. After that, all remained tranquil."

"But whatever can be the matter with him, father?"

"I do not know. When I went up to him, I was astonished at the agitation of his countenance, and the brilliancy of his eyes. He would have looked much the same, had he been delirious, or in a burning fever—so that, when I heard him say, he could have thrown himself out of the window, had it been open, I thought it more prudent to remove the caps from his pistols."

"I cannot understand it!" said Agricola. "So firm, intrepid, and cool a man as the marshal, a prey to such violence!"

"I tell you that something very extraordinary is passing

within him. For two days, he has not been to see his children, which is always a bad sign with him—to say nothing of the poor little angels themselves, who are miserable at the notion that they have displeased their father. They displease him! If you only knew the life they lead, dear creatures! a walk or ride with me and their companion, for I never let them go out alone, and, the rest of their time, at their studies, reading, or needlework—always together—and then to bed. Yet their duenna, who is, I think, a worthy woman, tells me that sometimes at night, she has seen them shed tears in their sleep. Poor children! they have hitherto known but little happiness," added the soldier, with a sigh.

At this moment, hearing some one walk hastily across the courtyard, Dagobert raised his eyes, and saw Marshal Simon, with pale face and bewildered air, holding in his two hands a letter, which he seemed to read with devouring anxiety.

CHAPTER XLVII.

THE GOLDEN CITY.

While Marshal Simon was crossing the little court with so agitated an air, reading the anonymous letter, which he had received by Spoil-sport's unexpected medium, Rose and Blanche were alone together, in the sitting-room they usually occupied, which had been entered for a moment by Loony during their absence. The poor children seemed destined to a succession of sorrows. At the moment their mourning for their mother drew near its close, the tragical death of their grandfather had again dressed them in funereal weeds. They were seated together upon a couch, in front of their work-table. Grief often produces the effect of years. Hence, in a few months, Rose and Blanche had become quite young women. To the infantine grace of their charming faces, formerly so plump and rosy, but now pale and thin, had succeeded an expression of grave and touching sadness. Their large, mild eyes of limpid azure, which always had a dreamy character, were now never bathed in those joyous tears, with which a burst of frank and hearty laughter used of old to adorn their silky lashes, when the comic coolness of Dagobert, or some funny trick of Spoil-sport, cheered them in the course of their long and weary pilgrimage.

In a word, those delightful faces, which the flowery pencil of Greuze could alone have painted in all their velvet freshness, were now worthy of inspiring the melancholy ideal of the immortal Ary Scheffer, who gave us Mignon aspiring to Paradise, and Margaret dreaming of Faust. Rose, leaning back on the couch, held her head somewhat bowed upon her bosom, over which was crossed a handkerchief of black crape. The light streaming from a window opposite, shone softly on her pure, white forehead, crowned by two thick bands of chestnut hair. Her look was fixed, and the open arch of her eyebrows, now somewhat contracted, announced a mind occupied with painful thoughts. Her thin, white little hands had fallen upon her knees, but still held the embroidery, on which she had been engaged. The profile of Blanche was visible, leaning a little towards her sister, with an expression of tender and anxious solicitude, whilst her needle remained in the canvas, as if she had just ceased to work.

"Sister," said Blanche, in a low voice, after some moments of silence, during which the tears seemed to mount to her eyes, "tell me what you are thinking of. You look so sad."

"I think of the Golden City of our dreams," replied Rose, almost in a whisper, after another short silence.

Blanche understood the bitterness of these words. Without speaking, she threw herself on her sister's neck, and wept. Poor girls! the Golden City of their dreams was Paris, with their father in it—Paris, the marvellous city of joys and festivals, through all of which the orphans had beheld the radiant and smiling countenance of their sire! But, alas! the Beautiful City had been changed into a place of tears, and death, and mourning. The same terrible pestilence which had struck down their mother in the heart of Siberia, seemed to have followed them like a dark and fatal cloud, which, always hovering above them, hid the mild blue of the sky, and the joyous light of the sun.

The Golden City of their dreams! It was the place, where perhaps one day their father would present to them two young lovers, good and fair as themselves. "They love you," he was to say; "they are worthy of you. Let each of you have a brother, and me two sons." Then what chaste, enchanting confusion for those two orphans, whose hearts, pure as crystal, had never reflected any image but that of Gabriel, the celestial messenger sent by their mother to protect them!

We can therefore understand the painful emotion of Blanche, when she heard her sister repeat, with bitter melancholy, those words which described their whole situation: "I think of the Golden City of our dreams!"

"Who knows?" proceeded Blanche, drying her sister's tears; "perhaps, happiness may yet be in store for us."

"Alas! if we are not happy with our father by us—shall we ever be so?"

"Yes, when we rejoin our mother," said Blanche, lifting her eyes to heaven.

"Then, sister, this dream may be a warning—it is so like that we had in Germany."

"The difference being that then the Angel Gabriel came down from heaven to us, and that this time he takes us from earth, to our mother."

"And this dream will perhaps come true, like the other, my sister. We dreamt that the Angel Gabriel would protect us, and he came to save us from the shipwreck."

"And, this time, we dream that he will lead us to heaven. Why should not that happen also?"

"But to bring that about, sister, our Gabriel, who saved us from the shipwreck, must die also. No, no; that must not happen. Let us pray that it may not happen."

"No, it will not happen—for it is only Gabriel's good angel, who is so like him, that we saw in our dream."

"Sister, dear, how singular is this dream!—Here, as in Germany, we have both dreamt the same—three times, the very same!"

"It is true. The Angel Gabriel bent over us, and looked at us with so mild and sad an air, saying: 'Come, my children! come, my sisters! Your mother waits for you. Poor children, arrived from so far!' added he in his tender voice: 'You have passed over the earth, gentle and innocent as two doves, to repose forever in the maternal nest.'"

"Yes, those were the words of the archangel," said the other orphan, with a pensive air; "we have done no harm to any one, and we have loved those who loved us—why should we fear to die?"

"Therefore, dear sister, we rather smiled than wept, when he took us by the hand, and, spreading wide his beautiful white wings, carried us along with him to the blue depths of the sky."

"To heaven, where our dear mother waited for us with open arms, her face all bathed in tears."

"Oh, sweet sister! one has not dreams like ours for nothing. And then," added she, looking at Rose, with a sad smile that went to the heart, "our death might perhaps end the sorrow, of which we have been the cause."

"Alas! it is not our fault. We love him so much. But we are so timid and sorrowful before him, that he may perhaps think we love him not."

So saying, Rose took her handkerchief from her work-basket, to dry her tears; a paper, folded in the form of a letter, fell out.

At this sight, the two shuddered, and pressed close to one another, and Rose said to Blanche, in a trembling voice: "Another of these letters!—Oh, I am afraid! It will doubtless be like the last."

"We must pick it up quickly, that it may not be seen," said Blanche, hastily stooping to seize the letter; "the people who take interest in us might otherwise be exposed to great danger."

"But how could this letter come to us?"

"How did the others come to be placed right under our hand, and always in the absence of our duenna?"

"It is true. Why seek to explain the mystery? We should never be able to do so. Let us read the letter. It will perhaps be more favorable to us than the last." And the two sisters read as follows:—

"Continue to love your father, dear children, for he is very miserable, and you are the involuntary cause of his distress. You will never know the terrible sacrifices that your presence imposes on him; but, alas! he is the victim of his paternal duties. His sufferings are more cruel than ever; spare him at least those marks of tenderness, which occasion him so much more pain than pleasure. Each caress is a dagger-stroke, for he sees in you the innocent cause of his misfortunes. Dear children, you must not therefore despair. If you have enough command over yourselves, not to torture him by the display of too warm a tenderness, if you can mingle some reserve with your affection, you will greatly alleviate his sorrow. Keep these letters a secret from every one, even from good Dagobert, who loves you so much; otherwise, both he and you, your father, and the unknown friend who is writing to you, will be exposed to the utmost peril, for your enemies are indeed formidable. Courage and hope! May your father's tenderness be once more free from sorrow and regret!—That happy day is

perhaps not so far distant. Burn this letter like all the others!"

The above note was written with so much cunning that, even supposing the orphans had communicated it to their father or Dagobert, it would at the worst have been considered a strange, intrusive proceeding, but almost excusable from the spirit in which it was conceived. Nothing could have been contrived with more perfidious art, if we consider the cruel perplexity in which Marshal Simon was struggling between the fear of again leaving his children and the shame of neglecting what he considered a sacred duty. All the tenderness, all the susceptibility of heart which distinguished the orphans, had been called into play by these diabolical counsels, and the sisters soon perceived that their presence was in fact both sweet and painful to their father; for sometimes he felt himself incapable of leaving them, and sometimes the thought of a neglected duty spread a cloud of sadness over his brow. Hence the poor twins could not fail to value the fatal meaning of the anonymous letters they received. They were persuaded that, from some mysterious motive, which they were unable to penetrate, their presence was often importunate and even painful to their father. Hence the growing sadness of Rose and Blanche—hence the sort of fear and reserve which restrained the expression of their filial tenderness. A most painful situation for the marshal, who, deceived by inexplicable appearances, mistook, in his turn, their manner for indifference to him—and so, with breaking heart, and bitter grief upon his face, often abruptly quitted his children to conceal his tears!

And the desponding orphans said to each other: "We are the cause of our father's grief. It is our presence which makes him so unhappy."

The reader may now judge what ravages such a thought, when fixed and incessant, must have made on these young, loving, timid, and simple hearts. How could the orphans be on their guard against such anonymous communications, which spoke with reverence of all they loved, and seemed every day justified by the conduct of their father? Already victims of numerous plots, and hearing that they were surrounded by enemies, we can understand, how, faithful to the advice of their unknown friend, they forbore to confide to Dagobert these letters, in which he was so justly appreciated. The object of the proceeding was very plain. By continually harassing the marshal on all sides, and persuading him

of the coldness of his children, the conspirators might naturally hope to conquer the hesitation which had hitherto prevented his again quitting his daughters to embark in a dangerous enterprise. To render the marshal's life so burdensome that he would desire to seek relief from his torments in any project of daring and generous chivalry, was one of the ends proposed by Rodin—and, as we have seen, it wanted neither logic nor possibility.

* * * * * * *

After having read the letter, the two remained for a moment silent and dejected. Then Rose, who held the paper in her hand, started up suddenly, approached the chimney-piece, and threw the letter into the fire, saying, with a timid air: "We must burn it quickly, or perhaps some great danger will ensue."

"What greater misfortune can happen to us," said Blanche, despondingly, "than to cause such sorrow to our father? What can be the reason of it?"

"Perhaps," said Rose, whose tears were slowly trickling down her cheek, "he does not find us what he could have desired. He may love us well as the children of our poor mother, but we are not the daughters he had dreamed of. Do you understand me, sister?"

"Yes, yes—that is perhaps what occasions all his sorrow. We are so badly informed, so wild, so awkward, that he is no doubt ashamed of us; and, as he loves us in spite of all, it makes him suffer."

"Alas! it is not our fault. Our dear mother brought us up in the deserts of Siberia as well as she could."

"Oh! father himself does not reproach us with it; only it gives him pain."

"Particularly if he has friends whose daughters are very beautiful, and possessed of all sorts of talents. Then he must bitterly regret that we are not the same."

"Dost remember when he took us to see our cousin, Mdlle. Adrienne, who was so affectionate and kind to us, that he said to us, with admiration: 'Did you notice her, my children? How beautiful she is, and what talent, what a noble heart, and therewith such grace and elegance!'"

"Oh, it is very true! Mdlle. de Cardoville is so beautiful, her voice is so sweet and gentle, that, when we saw and heard her, we fancied that all our troubles were at an end."

"And it is because of such beauty, no doubt, that our father, comparing us with our cousin and so many other

handsome young ladies, cannot be very proud of us. And he, who is so loved and honored, would have liked to have been proud of his daughters."

Suddenly Rose laid her hand on her sister's arm, and said to her, with anxiety: "Listen! listen! they are talking very loud in father's bedroom."

"Yes," said Blanche, listening in her turn; "and I can hear him walking. That is his step."

"Good heaven! how he raises his voice; he seems to be in a great passion; he will perhaps come this way."

And at the thought of their father's coming—that father who really adored them—the unhappy children looked in terror at each other. The sound of a loud and angry voice became more and more distinct; and Rose, trembling through all her frame, said to her sister: "Do not let us remain here! Come into our room."

"Why?"

"We should hear, without designing it, the words of our father—and he does not perhaps know that we are so near."

"You are right. Come, come!" answered Blanche, as she rose hastily from her seat.

"Oh! I am afraid. I have never heard him speak in so angry a tone."

"Oh! kind heaven!" said Blanche, growing pale, as she stopped involuntarily. "It is to Dagobert that he is talking so loud."

"What can be the matter—to make our father speak to him in that way?"

"Alas! some great misfortune must have happened."

"Oh, sister! do not let us remain here! It pains me too much to hear Dagobert thus spoken to."

The crash of some article, hurled with violence and broken to pieces in the next room, so frightened the orphans, that, pale and trembling with emotion, they rushed into their own apartment, and fastened the door. We must now explain the cause of Marshal Simon's violent anger.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

THE STUNG LION.

This was the scene, the sound of which had so terrified Rose and Blanche. At first alone in his chamber, in a state of exasperation difficult to describe, Marshal Simon had begun to walk hastily up and down, his handsome, manly face inflamed with rage, his eyes sparkling with indignation, while on his broad forehead, crowned with short-cut hair that was now turning gray, large veins, of which you might count the pulsations, were swollen almost to bursting; and sometimes his thick, black moustache was curled with a convulsive motion, not unlike that which is seen in the visage of a raging lion. And even as the wounded lion, in its fury, harassed and tortured by a thousand invisible darts, walks up and down its den with savage wrath, so Marshal Simon paced the floor of his room, as if bounding from side to side; sometimes he stooped, as though bending beneath the weight of his anger; sometimes, on the contrary, he paused abruptly, drew himself up to his full height, crossed his arms upon his vigorous chest, and with raised brow, threatening and terrible look, seemed to defy some invisible enemy, and murmur confused exclamations. Then he stood like a man of war and battle in all his intrepid fire.

And now he stamped angrily with his foot, approached the chimney-piece, and pulled the bell so violently that the bell-rope remained in his hand. A servant hastened to attend to this precipitate summons. "Did you not tell Dagobert that I wished to speak to him?" cried the marshal.

"I executed your grace's orders, but M. Dagobert was accompanying his son to the door, and——"

"Very well!" interrupted Marshal Simon, with an abrupt and imperious gesture.

The servant went out, and his master continued to walk up and down with impatient steps, crumpling, in his rage, a letter that he held in his left hand. This letter had been innocently delivered by Spoil-sport, who, seeing him come in, had run joyously to meet him. At length the door opened,

and Dagobert appeared. "I have been waiting for you a long time, sirrah!" cried the marshal, in an irritated tone.

Dagobert, more pained than surprised at this burst of anger, which he rightly attributed to the constant state of excitement in which the marshal had now been for some time past, answered mildly: "I beg your pardon, general, but I was letting out my son——"

"Read that, sir!" said the marshal abruptly, giving him the letter.

While Dagobert was reading it, the marshal resumed, with growing anger, as he kicked over a chair that stood in his way: "Thus, even in my own house, there are wretches bribed to harass me with incredible perseverance. Well! have you read it, sir?"

"It is a fresh insult to add to the others," said Dagobert, coolly, as he threw the letter into the fire.

"The letter is infamous—but it speaks the truth," replied the marshal. Dagobert looked at him in amazement.

"And can you tell who brought me this infamous letter?" continued the marshal. "One would think the devil had a hand in it—for it was your dog!"

"Spoil-sport?" said Dagobert, in the utmost surprise.

"Yes," answered the marshal, bitterly; "it is no doubt a joke of your invention."

"I have no heart for joking, general," answered Dagobert, more and more saddened by the irritable state of the marshal; "I cannot explain how it happened. Spoil-sport is a good carrier, and no doubt found the letter in the house——"

"And who can have left it there? Am I surrounded by traitors? Do you keep no watch? You, in whom I have every confidence?"

"Listen to me, general——"

But the marshal proceeded, without waiting to hear him: "What! I have made war for five-and-twenty years, I have battled with armies, I have struggled victoriously through the evil times of exile and proscription, I have withstood blows from maces of iron—and now I am to be killed with pins! Pursued into my own house, harassed with impunity, worn out, tortured every minute, to gratify some unknown, miserable hate!—When I say unknown, I am wrong—it is D'Aigrigny, the renegade, who is at the bottom of all this, I am sure. I have in the world but one enemy, and he is the man. I must finish with him, for I am weary of this—it is too much!"

"But, general, remember he is a priest——"

"What do I care for that? Have I not seen him handle the sword? I will yet make a soldier's blood rise to the forehead of the traitor!"

"But, general——"

"I tell you, that I must be avenged on some one," cried the marshal, with an accent of the most violent exasperation; "I tell you, that I must find a living representative of these cowardly plots, that I may at once make an end of him!—They press upon me from all sides; they make my life a hell—you know it—and you do nothing to save me from these tortures, which are killing me as by a slow fire. Can I have no one in whom to trust?"

"General, I can't let you say that," replied Dagobert, in a calm, but firm voice.

"And why not?"

"General, I can't let you say that you have no one to trust to. You might end perhaps in believing it, and then it would be even worse for yourself, than for those who well know their devotion for you, and would go through fire and water to serve you. I am one of them—and you know it."

These simple words, pronounced by Dagobert with a tone of deep conviction, recalled the marshal to himself; for although his honorable and generous character might from time to time be embittered by irritation and grief, he soon recovered his natural equanimity. So, addressing Dagobert in a less abrupt tone, he said to him, though still much agitated: "You are right. I could never doubt your fidelity. But anger deprives me of my senses. This infamous letter is enough to drive one mad. I am unjust, ungrateful—yes, ungrateful—and to you!"

"Do not think of me, general. With a kind word at the end, you might blow me up all the year round. But what has happened?"

The general's countenance again darkened, as he answered rapidly: "I am looked down upon, and despised!"

"You?"

"Yes, I. After all," resumed the marshal, bitterly, "why should I conceal from you this new wound? If I doubted you a moment, I owe you some compensation, and you shall know all. For some time past, I perceived that, when I meet any of my old companions in arms, they try to avoid me——"

"What! was it to this that the anonymous letter alluded?"

"Yes; and it spoke the truth," replied the marshal, with a sigh of grief and indignation.

"But it is impossible, general—you are so loved and respected——"

"Those are mere words; I speak of positive facts. When I appear, the conversation is often interrupted. Instead of treating me as an old comrade, they affect towards me a rigorously cold politeness. There are a thousand little shades, a thousand trifles, which wound the heart, but which it is impossible to notice——"

"What you are now saying, general, quite confounds me," replied Dagobert. "You assure me of it, and I am forced to believe you."

"Oh, it is intolerable! I was resolved to ease my heart of it; so, this morning, I went to General d'Havrincourt, who was colonel with me in the Imperial Guard; he is honor and honesty itself. I went to him with open heart. 'I perceive,' said I, 'the coldness that is shown me. Some calumny must be circulating to my disadvantage. Tell me all about it. Knowing the attack, I shall be able to defend myself——'"

"Well, general?"

"D'Havrincourt remained impassible, ceremoniously polite. To all my questions he answered coldly: 'I am not aware, my lord duke, that any calumny has been circulated with regard to you.'—'Do not call me "my lord duke," my dear D'Havrincourt; we are old fellow-soldiers and friends my honor is somewhat touchy, I confess, and I find that you and our comrades do not receive me so cordially, as in times past. You do not deny it; I see, I know, I feel it.'—To all this D'Havrincourt answered, with the same coldness: 'I have never seen any one wanting in respect towards you.'—'I am not talking of respect,' exclaimed I, as I clasped his hand affectionately, though I observed that he but feebly returned the pressure; 'I speak of cordiality, confidence, which I once enjoyed, while now I am treated like a stranger. Why is it? What has occasioned this change?'—Still cold and reserved, he answered: 'These distinctions are so nice, marshal, that it is impossible for me to give you any opinion on the subject.'—My heart swelled with grief and anger. What was I to do? To quarrel with D'Havrincourt would have been absurd. A sense of dignity forced me to break off the interview, but it has only confirmed my fears. Thus," added the marshal, getting more and more animated, "thus am I fallen from

the esteem to which I am entitled, thus am I despised, without even knowing the cause! Is it not odious? If they would only utter a charge against me—I should at least be able to defend myself, and to find an answer. But no, no! not even a word—only the cold politeness that is worse than any insult. Oh! it is too much, too much! for all this comes but in addition to other cares. What a life is mine since the death of my father! If I did but find rest and happiness at home—but no! I come in, but to read shameful letters; and still worse," added the marshal, in a heart-rending tone, and after a moment's hesitation, "to find my children grow more and more indifferent towards me. Yes," continued he, perceiving the amazement of Dagobert, "and yet they know how much I love them!"

"Your daughters indifferent!" exclaimed Dagobert, in astonishment. "You make them such a reproach?"

"Oh! I do not blame them. They have hardly had time to know me."

"Not had time to know you?" returned the soldier, in a tone of remonstrance, and warming up in his turn. "Ah! of what did their mother talk to them, except you? and I too! what could I teach your children except to know and love you?"

"You take their part—that is natural—they love you better than they do me," said the marshal, with growing bitterness. Dagobert felt himself so painfully affected, that he looked at the marshal without answering.

"Yes!" continued the other; "yes! it may be base and ungrateful—but no matter!—Twenty times I have felt jealous of the affectionate confidence which my children display towards you, while with me they seem always to be in fear. If their melancholy faces ever grow animated for a moment, it is in talking to you, in seeing you; while for me they have nothing but cold respect—and that kills me. Sure of the affection of my children, I would have braved and surmounted every difficulty——" Then, seeing that Dagobert rushed towards the door which led to the chamber of Rose and Blanche, the marshal asked: "Where are you going?"

"For your daughters, general."

"What for?"

"To bring them face to face with you—to tell them: 'My children, your father thinks that you do not love him.'—I will only say that—and then you will see."

"Dagobert! I forbid you to do it," cried the marshal, hastily.

"I don't care for that—you have no right to be unjust to the poor children," said the soldier, as he again advanced towards the door.

"Dagobert, I command you to remain here," cried the marshal.

"Listen to me, general. I am your soldier, your inferior, your servant, if you will," said the old grenadier, roughly; "but neither rank nor station shall keep me silent, when I have to defend your daughters. All must be explained—I know but one way—and that is to bring honest people face to face."

If the marshal had not seized him by the arm, Dagobert would have entered the apartment of the young girls.

"Remain!" said the marshal, so imperiously, that the soldier, accustomed to obedience, hung his head, and stood still.

"What would you do?" resumed the marshal. "Tell my children, that I think they do not love me? induce them to affect a tenderness they do not feel—when it is not their fault, but mine?"

"Oh, general!" said Dagobert, in a tone of despair, "I no longer feel anger, in hearing you speak thus of your children. It is such grief, that it breaks my heart!"

Touched by the expression of the soldier's countenance, the marshal continued, less abruptly: "Come, I may be wrong; and yet I ask you, without bitterness or jealousy, are not my children more confiding, more familiar, with you than with me?"

"God bless me, general!" cried Dagobert; "if you come to that, they are more familiar with Spoil-sport than with either of us. You are their father; and, however kind a father may be, he must always command some respect. Familiar with me! I should think so. A fine story! What the devil should they respect in me, who, except that I am six feet high, and wear a moustache, might pass for the old woman that nursed them?—and then I must say, that, even before the death of your worthy father, you were sad and full of thought; the children have remarked that, and what you take for coldness on their part, is, I am sure, anxiety for you. Come, general; you are not just. You complain, because they love you too much."

"I complain, because I suffer," said the marshal, in an agony of excitement. "I alone know my sufferings."

"They must indeed be grievous, general," said Dagobert, carried further than he would otherwise have gone by his

attachment for the orphans, "since those who love you feel them so cruelly."

"What, sir! more reproaches?"

"Yes, general, reproaches," cried Dagobert. "Your children have the right to complain of you, since you accuse them so unjustly."

"Sir," said the marshal, scarcely able to contain himself, "this is enough—this is too much!"

"Oh, yes! it is enough," replied Dagobert, with rising emotion. "Why defend unfortunate children, who can only love and submit? Why defend them against your unhappy blindness?"

The marshal started with anger and impatience, but then replied, with a forced calmness: "I needs must remember all that I owe you—and I will not forget it, say what you will."

"But, general," cried Dagobert, "why will you not let me fetch your children?"

"Do you not see that this scene is killing me?" cried the exasperated marshal. "Do you not understand, that I will not have my children witness what I suffer? A father's grief has its dignity, sir; and you ought to feel for and respect it."

"Respect it? no—not when it is founded on injustice!"

"Enough, sir—enough!"

"And not content with tormenting yourself," cried Dagobert, unable any longer to control his feelings, "do you know what you will do? You will make your children die of sorrow. Was it for this, that I brought them to you from the depths of Siberia?"

"More reproaches!"

"Yes; for the worst ingratitude towards me, is to make your children unhappy."

"Leave the room, sir!" cried the marshal, quite beside himself, and so terrible with rage and grief, that Dagobert, regretting that he had gone so far, resumed: "I was wrong, general. I have perhaps been wanting in respect to you—forgive me—but——"

"I forgive you—only leave me!" said the marshal, hardly restraining himself.

"One word, general——"

"I entreat you to leave me—I ask it as a service—is that enough?" said the marshal, with renewed efforts to control the violence of his emotions.

A deadly paleness succeeded to the high color which dur-

ing this painful scene had inflamed the cheeks of the marshal. Alarmed at this symptom, Dagobert redoubled his entreaties. "I implore you, general," said he, in an agitated voice, "to permit me for one moment——"

"Since you will have it so, sir, I must be the one to leave," said the marshal, making a step towards the door.

These words were said in such a manner, that Dagobert could no longer resist. He hung his head in despair, looked for a moment in silent supplication at the marshal, and then, as the latter seemed yielding to a new movement of rage, the soldier slowly quitted the room.

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A few minutes had scarcely elapsed since the departure of Dagobert, when the marshal, who, after a long and gloomy silence, had repeatedly drawn near the door of his daughters' apartment with a mixture of hesitation and anguish, suddenly made a violent effort, wiped the cold sweat from his brow, and entered the chamber in which Rose and Blanche had taken refuge.

CHAPTER XLIX.

THE TEST.

Dagobert was right in defending his children, as he paternally called Rose and Blanche, and yet the apprehensions of the marshal with regard to the coldness of his daughters, were unfortunately justified by appearances. As he had told his father, unable to explain the sad, and almost trembling embarrassment, which his daughters felt in his presence, he sought in vain for the cause of what he termed their indifference. Now reproaching himself bitterly for not concealing from them his grief at the death of their mother, he feared he might have given them to understand that they would be unable to console him; now supposing that he had not shown himself sufficiently tender, and that he had chilled them with his military sternness; and now repeating with bitter regret, that, having always lived away from them, he must be always a stranger to them. In a word, the most unlikely suppositions presented themselves by turns to his mind, and whenever such seeds of doubt, suspicion, or fear, are blended with a warm affection, they will sooner or later develop themselves with fatal effect.

Yet, notwithstanding this fancied coldness, from which he suffered so much, the affection of the marshal for his daughters was so true and deep, that the thought of again quitting them caused the hesitations which were the torment of his life, and provoked an incessant struggle between his paternal love and the duty he held most sacred.

The injurious calumnies, which had been so skilfully propagated, that men of honor, like his old brothers in arms, were found to attach some credit to them, had been spread with frightful pertinacity by the friends of the Princess de Saint-Dizier. We shall describe hereafter the meaning and object of these odious reports, which, joined with so many other fatal injuries, had filled up the measure of the marshal's indignation. Inflamed with anger, excited almost to madness by this incessant "stabbing with pins" (as he had himself called it), and offended at some of Dagobert's words, he had spoken harshly to him. But, after the soldier's departure, when left to reflect in silence, the marshal remembered the warm and earnest expressions of the defender of his children, and a doubt crossed his mind, as to the reality of the coldness of which he accused them. Therefore, having taken a terrible resolution, in case a new trial should confirm his desponding doubts, he entered, as we before said, his daughters' chamber. The discussion with Dagobert had been so loud, that the sound of the voices had confusedly reached the ears of the two sisters, even after they had taken refuge in their bedroom. So that, on the arrival of their father, their pale faces betrayed their fear and anxiety. At sight of the marshal, whose countenance was also much agitated, the girls rose respectfully, but remained close together, trembling in each other's arms. And yet there was neither anger nor severity on their father's face—only a deep, almost supplicating grief, which seemed to say: "My children, I suffer—I have come to you—console me, love me! or I shall die!"

The marshal's countenance was at this moment so expressive, that, the first impulse of fear once surmounted, the sisters were about to throw themselves into his arms; but remembering the recommendations of the anonymous letter, which told them how painful any effusion of their tenderness was to their father, they exchanged a rapid glance, and remained motionless. By a cruel fatality, the marshal at this moment burned to open his arms to his children. He looked at them with love, he even made a slight movement as if to call them to him; but he would not attempt more, for fear

of meeting with no response. Still the poor children, paralyzed by perfidious counsels, remained mute, motionless, trembling!

"It is all over," thought he, as he gazed upon them. "No chord of sympathy stirs in their bosom. Whether I go—whether I remain—matters not to them. No, I am nothing to these children—since, at this awful moment, when they see me perhaps for the last time, no filial instinct tells them that their affection might save me still!"

During these terrible reflections, the marshal had not taken his eyes off his children, and his manly countenance assumed an expression at once so touching and mournful—his look revealed so painfully the tortures of his despairing soul—that Rose and Blanche, confused, alarmed, but yielding together to a spontaneous movement, threw themselves on their father's neck, and covered him with tears and caresses. Marshal Simon had not spoken a word; his daughters had not uttered a sound; and yet all three had at length understood one another. A sympathetic shock had electrified and mingled those three hearts. Vain fears, false doubts, lying counsel, all had yielded to the irresistible emotion, which had brought the daughters to their father's arms. A sudden revelation gave them faith, at the fatal moment when incurable suspicion was about to separate them forever.

In a second, the marshal felt all this, but words failed him. Pale, bewildered, kissing the brows, the hair, the hands of his daughters, weeping, sighing, smiling all in turn, he was wild, delirious, drunk with happiness. At length, he exclaimed: "I have found them—or rather, I had never lost them. They loved me, and did not dare to tell me so. I overawed them. And I thought it was my fault. Heavens! what good that does! what strength, what heart, what hope!—Ha! ha!" cried he, laughing and weeping at the same time, whilst he covered his children with caresses; "they may despise me now, they may harass me now—I defy them all. My own blue eyes! my sweet blue eyes! look at me well, and inspire me with new life."

"Oh, father! you love us then as much as we love you?" cried Rose, with enchanting simplicity.

"And we may often, very often, perhaps every day, throw ourselves on your neck, embrace you, and prove how glad we are to be with you?"

"Show you, dear father, all the store of love we were heaping up in our hearts—so sad, alas! that we could not spend it upon you?"

"Tell you aloud all that we think in secret?"

"Yes—you may do so—you may do so," said Marshal Simon, faltering with joy; "what prevented you, my children? But no; do not answer; enough of the past!—I know all, I understand all. You misinterpreted my gloom, and it made you sad; I, in my turn, misinterpreted your sadness. But never mind; I scarcely know what I am saying to you. I only think of looking at you—and it dazzles me—it confuses me—it is the dizziness of joy!"

"Oh, look at us, father! look into our eyes, into our hearts," cried Rose, with rapture.

"And you will read there, happiness for us, and love for you, sir!" added Blanche.

"Sir, sir!" said the marshal, in a tone of affectionate reproach; "what does that mean? Will you call me *father*, if you please?"

"Dear father, your hand!" said Blanche, as she took it, and placed it on her heart.

"Dear father, your hand!" said Rose, as she took the other hand of the marshal. "Do you believe now in our love and happiness?" she continued.

It is impossible to describe the charming expression of filial pride in the divine face of the girls, as their father, slightly pressing their virgin bosoms, seemed to count with delight the joyous pulsations of their hearts.

"Oh, yes! happiness and affection can alone make the heart beat thus!" cried the marshal.

A hoarse sob, heard in the direction of the open door, made the three turn round, and there they saw the tall figure of Dagobert, with the black nose of Spoil-sport reaching to his master's knee. The soldier, drying his eyes and moustache with his little blue cotton handkerchief, remained motionless as the god Terminus. When he could speak, he addressed himself to the marshal, and, shaking his head, muttered, in a hoarse voice, for the good man was swallowing his tears: "Did I not tell you so?"

"Silence!" said the marshal, with a sign of intelligence. "You were a better father than myself, my old friend. Come and kiss them! I shall not be jealous."

The marshal stretched out his hand to the soldier, who pressed it cordially, whilst the two sisters threw themselves on his neck, and Spoil-sport, according to custom wishing to have his share in the general joy, raised himself on his hind legs, and rested his fore-paws against his master's back. There was a moment of profound silence. The celestial

felicity enjoyed during that moment, by the marshal, his daughters, and the soldier, was interrupted by the barking of Spoil-sport, who suddenly quitted the attitude of a biped. The happy group separated, looked round, and saw Loony's stupid face. He looked even duller than usual, as he stood quite still in the doorway, staring with wide-stretched eyes, and holding a feather-broom under his arm, and in his hand the ever-present basket of wood.

Nothing makes one so gay as happiness; and, though this grotesque figure appeared at a very unseasonable moment, it was received with frank laughter from the blooming lips of Rose and Blanche. Having made the marshal's daughters laugh, after their long sadness, Loony at once acquired a claim to the indulgence of the marshal, who said to him, good-humoredly: "What do you want, my lad?"

"It's not me, my lord duke!" answered Loony, laying his hand on his breast, as if he were taking a vow, so that his feather-brush fell down from under his arm. The laughter of the girls redoubled.

"It is not you?" said the marshal.

"Here! Spoil-sport!" Dagobert called, for the honest dog seemed to have a secret dislike for the pretended idiot, and approached him with an angry air.

"No, my lord duke, it is not me!" resumed Loony. "It is the footman who told me to tell M. Dagobert, when I brought up the wood, to tell my lord duke, as I was coming up with the basket, that M. Robert wants to see him."

The girls laughed still more at this new stupidity. But, at the name of Robert, Marshal Simon started.

M. Robert was the secret emissary of Rodin, with regard to the possible, but adventurous, enterprise of attempting the liberation of Napoleon II.

After a moment's silence, the marshal, whose face was still radiant with joy and happiness, said to Loony: "Beg M. Robert to wait for me a moment in my study."

"Yes, my lord duke," answered Loony, bowing almost to the ground.

The simpleton withdrew, and the marshal said to his daughters, in a joyous tone, "You see, that, in a moment like this, one does not leave one's children, even for M. Robert."

"Oh! that's right, father!" cried Blanche, gayly; "for I was already very angry with this M. Robert."

"Have you pen and paper at hand?" asked the marshal.

"Yes, father; there on the table," said Rose, hastily, as

she pointed to a little desk near one of the windows, towards which the marshal now advanced rapidly.

From motives of delicacy, the girls remained where they were, close to the fireplace, and caressed each other tenderly, as if to congratulate themselves in private on the unexpected happiness of this day.

The marshal seated himself at the desk, and made a sign to Dagobert to draw near.

While he wrote rapidly a few words in a firm hand, he said to the soldier with a smile, in so low a tone that it was impossible for his daughters to hear: "Do you know what I had almost resolved upon, before entering this room?"

"What, general?"

"To blow my brains out. It is to my children that I owe my life." And the marshal continued writing.

Dagobert started at this communication, and then replied, also in a whisper: "It would not have been with your pistols. I took off the caps."

The marshal turned round hastily, and looked at him with an air of surprise. But the soldier only nodded his head affirmatively, and added: "Thank heaven, we have now done with all those ideas!"

The marshal's only answer was to glance at his children, his eyes swimming with tenderness, and sparkling with delight; then, sealing the note he had written, he gave it to the soldier, and said to him, "Give that to M. Robert. I will see him to-morrow."

Dagobert took the letter, and went out. Returning towards his daughters, the marshal joyfully extended his arms to them, and said, "Now, young ladies, two nice kisses for having sacrificed M. Robert to you. Have I not earned them?" And Rose and Blanche threw themselves on their father's neck.

* * * * * * *

About the time that these events were taking place at Paris, two travellers, wide apart from each other, exchanged mysterious thoughts through the breadth of space.

CHAPTER L.

THE RUINS OF THE ABBEY OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST.

The sun is fast sinking. In the depths of an immense piny wood, in the midst of profound solitude, rise the ruins of an abbey, once sacred to St. John the Baptist. Ivy, moss, and creeping plants, almost entirely conceal the stones, now black with age. Some broken arches, some walls pierced with ovals, still remain standing, visible on the dark background of the thick wood. Looking down upon this mass of ruins, from a broken pedestal, half-covered with ivy, a mutilated, but colossal statue of stone still keeps its place. This statue is strange and awful. It represents a headless human figure. Clad in the antique toga, it holds in its hand a dish, and on that dish is a head. This head is its own. It is the statue of St. John the Baptist and Martyr, put to death by wish of Herodias.

The silence around is solemn. From time to time, however, is heard the dull rustling of the enormous branches of the pine-trees, shaken by the wind. Copper-colored clouds, reddened by the setting sun, pass slowly over the forest, and are reflected in the current of a brook, which, deriving its source from a neighboring mass of rocks, flows through the ruins. The water flows, the clouds pass on, the ancient trees tremble, the breeze murmurs.

Suddenly, through the shadow thrown by the overhanging wood, which stretches far into endless depths, a human form appears. It is a woman. She advances slowly towards the ruins. She has reached them. She treads the once sacred ground. This woman is pale, her look sad, her long robe floats on the wind, her feet covered with dust. She walks with difficulty and pain. A block of stone is placed near the stream, almost at the foot of the statue of St. John the Baptist. Upon this stone she sinks breathless and exhausted, worn out with fatigue. And yet, for many days, many years, many centuries, she has walked on unwearied.

For the first time, she feels an unconquerable sense of lassitude. For the first time, her feet begin to fail her. For

the first time, she, who traversed, with firm and equal footsteps, the moving lava of torrid deserts, while whole caravans were buried in drifts of fiery sand—who passed, with steady and disdainful tread, over the eternal snows of Arctic regions, over icy solitudes, in which no other human being could live—who had been spared by the devouring flames of conflagrations, and by the impetuous waters of torrents—she, in brief, who for centuries had had nothing in common with humanity—for the first time suffers mortal pain.

Her feet bleed, her limbs ache with fatigue, she is devoured by burning thirst. She feels these infirmities, yet scarcely dares to believe them real. Her joy would be too immense! But now, her throat becomes dry, contracted, all on fire. She sees the stream, and throws herself on her knees, to quench her thirst in that crystal current, transparent as a mirror. What happens then? Hardly have her fevered lips touched the fresh, pure water, than, still kneeling, supported on her hands, she suddenly ceases to drink, and gazes eagerly on the limpid stream. Forgetting the thirst which devours her, she utters a loud cry—a cry of deep, earnest, religious joy, like a note of praise and infinite gratitude to heaven. In that deep mirror, she perceives that she has grown older.

In a few days, a few hours, a few minutes, perhaps in a single second, she has attained the maturity of age. She, who for more than eighteen centuries has been as a woman of twenty, carrying through successive generations the load of her imperishable youth—she has grown old, and may, perhaps, at length, hope to die. Every minute of her life may now bring her nearer to the last home! Transported by that ineffable hope, she rises, and lifts her eyes to heaven, clasping her hands in an attitude of fervent prayer. Then her eyes rest on the tall statue of stone, representing St. John. The head, which the martyr carries in his hand, seems, from beneath its half-closed granite eyelid, to cast upon the Wandering Jewess a glance of commiseration and pity. And it was she, Herodias, who, in the cruel intoxication of a pagan festival, demanded the murder of the saint! And it is at the foot of the martyr's image, that, for the first time, the immortality, which weighed on her for so many centuries, seems likely to find a term!

"Oh, impenetrable mystery! oh, divine hope!" she cries. "The wrath of heaven is at length appeased. The hand of the Lord brings me to the feet of the blessed martyr, and I begin once more to feel myself a human creature.

And yet it was to avenge his death, that the same heaven condemned me to eternal wanderings!

"Oh, Lord! grant that I may not be the only one forgiven. May he—the artisan, who, like me, daughter of a king, wanders on for centuries—likewise hope to reach the end of that immense journey!

"Where is he, Lord? where is he? Hast thou deprived me of the power once bestowed, to see and hear him through the vastness of intervening space? Oh, in this mighty moment, restore me that divine gift—for the more I feel these human infirmities, which I hail and bless as the end of my eternity of ills, the more my sight loses the power to traverse immensity, and my ear to catch the sound of that wanderer's accents, from the other extremity of the globe?"

Night had fallen, dark and stormy. The wind rose in the midst of the great pine-trees. Behind their black summits, through masses of dark cloud, slowly sailed the silver disk of the moon. The invocation of the Wandering Jewess had perhaps been heard. Suddenly, her eyes closed—with hands clasped together, she remained kneeling in the heart of the ruins—motionless as a statue upon a tomb. And then she had a wondrous dream!

CHAPTER LI.

THE CALVARY.

This was the vision of Herodias: On the summit of a high, steep, rocky mountain, there stands a cross. The sun is sinking, even as when the Jewess herself, worn out with fatigue, entered the ruins of St. John's Abbey. The great figure on the cross—which looks down from this Calvary, on the mountain, and on the vast, dreary plain beyond—stands out white and pale against the dark, blue clouds, which stretch across the heavens, and assume a violent tint towards the horizon. There, where the setting sun has left a long track of lurid light, almost of the hue of blood—as far as the eye can reach, no vegetation appears on the surface of the gloomy desert, covered with sand and stones, like the ancient bed of some dried-up ocean. A silence as of death broods over this desolate tract. Sometimes, gigantic black vultures, with red unfeathered necks, luminous

yellow eyes, stooping from their lofty flight in the midst of these solitudes, come to make their bloody feast on the prey they have carried off from less uncultivated regions.

How, then, did this Calvary, this place of prayer, come to be erected so far from the abodes of men? This Calvary was prepared at a great cost by a repentant sinner. He had done much harm to his fellow-creatures, and, in the hope of obtaining pardon for his crimes, he had climbed this mountain on his knees, and become a hermit, and lived there till his death, at the foot of this cross, only sheltered by a roof of thatch, now long since swept away by the wind. The sun is still sinking. The sky becomes darker. The luminous lines on the horizon grow fainter and fainter, like heated bars of iron that gradually grow cool. Suddenly, on the eastern side of the Calvary, is heard the noise of some falling stones, which, loosened from the side of the mountain, roll down rebounding to its base. These stones have been loosened by the foot of a traveller, who, after traversing the plain below, has, during the last hour, been climbing the steep ascent. He is not yet visible—but one hears the echo of his tread—slow, steady, and firm. At length, he reaches the top of the mountain, and his tall figure stands out against the stormy sky.

The traveller is pale as the great figure on the cross. On his broad forehead a black line extends from one temple to the other. It is the cobbler of Jerusalem. The poor artisan, who, hardened by misery, injustice and oppression, without pity for the suffering of the Divine Being who bore the cross, repulsed him from his dwelling, and bade him: "Go on! go on! go on!" And, from that day, the avenging Deity has in his turn said to the artisan of Jerusalem: "Go on! go on! go on!"

And he has gone on, without end or rest. Nor did the divine vengeance stop there. From time to time death has followed the steps of the wanderer, and innumerable graves have been even as mile-stones on his fatal path. And if ever he found periods of repose in the midst of his infinite grief, it was when the hand of the Lord led him into deep solitudes, like that where he now dragged his steps along. In passing over that dreary plain, or climbing to that rude Calvary, he at least heard no more the funeral knell, which always, always sounded behind him in every inhabited region.

All day long, even at this hour, plunged in the black abyss of his thoughts, following the fatal track—going

whither he was guided by the invisible hand, with head bowed on his breast, and eyes fixed upon the ground, the wanderer had passed over the plain, and ascended the mountain, without once looking at the sky—without even perceiving the Calvary—without seeing the image upon the cross. He thought of the last descendants of his race. He felt, by the sinking of his heart, that great perils continued to threaten him. And in the bitterness of a despair, wild and deep as the ocean, the cobbler of Jerusalem seated himself at the foot of the cross. At this moment a farewell ray of the setting sun, piercing the dark mass of clouds, threw a reflection upon the Calvary, vivid as a conflagration's glare. The Jew rested his forehead upon his hand. His long hair, shaken by the evening breeze, fell over his pale face—when, sweeping it back from his brow, he started with surprise—he, who had long ceased to wonder at anything. With eager glance he contemplated the long lock of hair that he held between his fingers. That hair, until now black as night, had become gray. He also, like unto Herodias, was growing older.

His progress towards old age, stopped for eighteen hundred years, had resumed its course. Like the Wandering Jewess, he might henceforth hope for the rest of the grave. Throwing himself on his knees, he stretched his hands towards heaven, to ask for the explanation of the mystery which filled him with hope. Then, for the first time, his eyes rested on the Crucified One, looking down upon the Calvary, even as the Wandering Jewess had fixed her gaze on the granite eyelids of the Blessed Martyr.

The Saviour, his head bowed under the weight of his crown of thorns, seemed from the cross to view with pity and pardon the artisan, who for so many centuries had felt his curse—and who, kneeling, with his body thrown backward in an attitude of fear and supplication, now lifted towards the crucifix his imploring hands.

"Oh, Messiah!" cried the Jew, "the avenging arm of heaven brings me back to the foot of this heavy cross, which thou didst bear, when, stopping at the door of my poor dwelling, thou wert repulsed with merciless harshness, and I said unto thee: 'Go on! go on!'—After my long life of wanderings, I am again before this cross, and my hair begins to whiten. Oh, Lord! in thy divine mercy, hast thou at length pardoned me? Have I reached the term of my endless march? Will thy celestial clemency grant me at length the repose of the sepulchre, which, until now, alas!

has ever fled before me?—Oh! if thy mercy should descend upon me, let it fall likewise upon that woman, whose woes are equal to mine own! Protect also the last descendants of my race! What will be their fate? Already, Lord, one of them—the only one that misfortune had perverted—has perished from the face of the earth. Is it for this that my hair grows gray? Will my crime only be expiated when there no longer remains in this world one member of our accursed race? Or does this proof of thy powerful goodness, Lord, which restores me to the condition of humanity, serve also as a sign of the pardon and happiness of my family? Will they at length triumph over the perils which beset them? Will they, accomplishing the good which their ancestor designed for his fellow-creatures, merit forgiveness both for themselves and me? Or will they, inexorably condemned as the accursed scions of an accursed stock, expiate the original stain of my detested crime?

"Oh, tell me—tell me, gracious Lord! shall I be forgiven with them, or will they be punished with me?"

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The twilight gave place to a dark and stormy night, yet the Jew continued to pray, kneeling at the foot of the cross.

CHAPTER LII.

THE COUNCIL.

The following scene took place at Saint-Dizier House, two days after the reconciliation of Marshal Simon with his daughters. The princess is listening with the most profound attention to the words of Rodin. The reverend father, according to his habit, stands leaning against the mantelpiece, with his hands thrust into the pockets of his old brown great-coat. His thick, dirty shoes have left their mark on the ermine hearth-rug. A deep sense of satisfaction is impressed on the Jesuit's cadaverous countenance. Princess de Saint-Dizier, dressed with that sort of modest elegance which becomes a mother of the church, keeps her eyes fixed on Rodin—for the latter has completely supplanted Father d'Aigrigny in the good graces of this pious lady. The coolness, audacity, lofty intelligence, and rough and imperious character of the ex-socius have overawed this proud

woman, and inspired her with a sincere admiration. Even his filthy habits and often brutal repartees have their charm for her, and she now prefers them to the exquisite politeness and perfumed elegance of the accomplished Father d'Aigrigny.

"Yes, madame," said Rodin, in a sanctified tone, for these people do not take off their masks even with their accomplices, "yes, madame, we have excellent news from our house at St. Hérem. M. Hardy, the infidel, the freethinker, has at length entered the pale of the holy Roman Catholic and Apostolic Church." Rodin pronounced these last words with a nasal twang, and the devout lady bowed her head respectfully.

"Grace has at length touched the heart of this impious man," continued Rodin, "and so effectually that, in his ascetic enthusiasm, he has already wished to take the vows which will bind him forever to our divine Order."

"So soon, father?" said the princess, in astonishment.

"Our statutes are opposed to this precipitation, unless in the case of a penitent *in articulo mortis*—on the very gasp of death—should such a person consider it necessary for his salvation to die in the habit of our Order, and leave us all his wealth for the greater glory of the Lord."

"And is M. Hardy in so dangerous a condition, father?"

"He has a violent fever. After so many successive calamities, which have miraculously brought him into the path of salvation," said Rodin, piously, "his frail and delicate constitution is almost broken up, morally and physically. Austerities, macerations, and the divine joys of ecstasy, will probably hasten his passage to eternal life, and in a few days," said the priest, shaking his head with a solemn air, "perhaps——"

"So soon as that, father?"

"It is almost certain. I have therefore made use of my dispensations, to receive the dear penitent, as *in articulo mortis*, a member of our divine Company, to which, in the usual course, he has made over all his possessions, present and to come—so that now he can devote himself entirely to the care of his soul, which will be one victim more rescued from the claws of Satan."

"Oh, father!" cried the lady, in admiration; "it is a miraculous conversion. Father d'Aigrigny told me how you had to contend against the influence of Abbé Gabriel."

"The Abbé Gabriel," replied Rodin, "has been punished for meddling with what did not concern him. I have pro-

cured his suspension, and he has been deprived of his curacy. I hear that he now goes about the cholera-hospitals to administer Christian consolation; we cannot oppose that—but this universal comforter is of the true heretical stamp."

"He is a dangerous character, no doubt," answered the princess, "for he has considerable influence over other men. It must have needed all your admirable and irresistible eloquence to combat the detestable counsels of this Abbé Gabriel, who had taken it into his head to persuade M. Hardy to return to the life of the world. Really, father, you are a second St. Chrysostom."

"Tut, tut, madame!" said Rodin, abruptly, for he was very little sensible to flattery; "keep that for others."

"I tell you that you're a second St. Chrysostom, father," repeated the princess, with enthusiasm; "like him, you deserve the name of Golden Mouth."

"Stuff, madame!" said Rodin, brutally, shrugging his shoulders; "my lips are too pale, my teeth too black, for a mouth of gold. You must be only joking."

"But, father——"

"No, madame, you will not catch old birds with chaff," replied Rodin, harshly. "I hate compliments, and I never pay them."

"Your modesty must pardon me, father," said the princess, humbly; "I could not resist the desire to express to you my admiration, for, as you almost predicted, or at least foresaw, two members of the Rennepont family, have, within the last few months, resigned all claim to the inheritance."

Rodin looked at Madame de Saint-Dizier with a softened and approving air, as he heard her thus describe the position of the two defunct claimants. For, in Rodin's view of the case, M. Hardy, in consequence of his donation and his suicidal asceticism, belonged no longer to this world.

The lady continued: "One of these men, a wretched artisan, has been led to his ruin by the exaggeration of his vices. You have brought the other into the path of salvation, by carrying out his loving and tender qualities. Honor, then, to your foresight, father! for you said that you would make use of the passions to attain your end."

"Do not boast too soon," said Rodin, impatiently. "Have you forgotten your niece, and the Hindoo, and the daughters of Marshal Simon? Have they also made a Christian end, or resigned their claim to share in this inheritance?"

"No, doubtless."

"Hence, you see, madame, we should not lose time in congratulating ourselves on the past, but make ready for the future. The great day approaches. The first of June is not far off. Heaven grant we may not see the four surviving members of the family continue to live impenitent up to that period, and so take possession of this enormous property—the source of perdition in their hands—but productive of the glory of the Church in the hands of our Company!"

"True, father!"

"By the way, you were to see your lawyers on the subject of your niece?"

"I have seen them, father. However uncertain may be the chance of which I spoke, it is worth trying. I shall know to-day, I hope, if it is legally possible."

"Perhaps then, in the new condition of life to which she would be reduced, we might find means to effect her conversion," said Rodin, with a strange and hideous smile; "until now, since she has been so fatally brought in contact with the Oriental, the happiness of these two pagans appears bright and changeless as the diamond. Nothing bites into it, not even Faringhea's tooth. Let us hope that the Lord will wreak justice on their vain and guilty felicity!"

This conversation was here interrupted by Father d'Aigrigny, who entered the room with an air of triumph, and exclaimed, "Victory!"

"What do you say?" asked the princess.

"He is gone—last night," said Father d'Aigrigny.

"Who?" said Rodin.

"Marshal Simon," replied the abbé.

"At last!" said Rodin, unable to hide his joy.

"It was no doubt his interview with General d'Havrincourt which filled up the measure," cried the princess, "for I know he had a long conversation with the general, who, like so many others, believed the reports in circulation. All means are good against the impious!" added the princess, by way of moral.

"Have you any details?" asked Rodin.

"I have just left Robert," said Father d'Aigrigny. "His age and description agree with the marshal's, and the latter travels with his papers. Only one thing has greatly surprised your emissary."

"What is that?" said Rodin.

"Until now, he had always to contend with the hesitations of the marshal, and had moreover noticed his gloomy and desponding air. Yesterday, on the contrary, he found him

so bright with happiness, that he could not help asking him the cause of the alteration."

"Well?" said Rodin and the princess together, both extremely surprised.

"The marshal answered: 'I am indeed the happiest man in the world; for I am going joyfully to accomplish a sacred duty!'"

The three actors in this scene looked at each other in silence.

"And what can have produced this sudden change in the mind of the marshal?" said the princess, with a pensive air. "We rather reckon on sorrow and every kind of irritation to urge him to engage in this adventurous enterprise."

"I cannot make it out," said Rodin, reflecting; "but no matter—he is gone. We must not lose a moment, to commence operations on his daughters. Has he taken that infernal soldier with him?"

"No," said Father d'Aigrigny; "unfortunately, he has not done so. Warned by the past, he will redouble his precautions; and a man, whom we might have used against him at a pinch, has just been taken with the contagion."

"Who is that?" asked the princess.

"Morok. I could count upon him, anywhere and for anything. He is lost to us; for, should he recover from the cholera, I fear he will fall a victim to a horrible and incurable disease."

"How so?"

"A few days ago, he was bitten by one of the mastiffs of his menagerie, and, the next day, the dog showed symptoms of hydrophobia."

"Ah! it is dreadful," cried the princess; "and where is this unfortunate man?"

"He has been taken to one of the temporary hospitals established in Paris, for at present he has only been attacked with cholera. It is doubly unfortunate, I repeat, for he was a devoted, determined fellow, ready for anything. Now this soldier, who has the care of the orphans, will be very difficult to get at, and yet only through him can we hope to reach Marshal Simon's daughters."

"That is clear," said Rodin, thoughtfully.

"Particularly since the anonymous letters have again awakened his suspicions," added Father d'Aigrigny, "and——"

"Talking of the anonymous letters," said Rodin suddenly

interrupting Father d'Aigrigny, "there is a fact that you ought to know; I will tell you why."

"What is it?"

"Besides the letters that you know of, Marshal Simon has received a number of others unknown to you, in which, by every possible means, it is tried to exasperate his irritation against yourself—for they remind him of all the reasons he has to hate you, and mock at him, because your sacred character shelters you from his vengeance."

Father d'Aigrigny looked at Rodin with amazement, colored in spite of himself, and said to him: "But for what purpose has your reverence acted in this manner?"

"First of all, to clear myself of suspicion with regard to the letters; then, to excite the rage of the marshal to madness, by incessantly reminding him of the just grounds he has to hate you, and of the impossibility of being avenged upon you. This, joined to the other emotions of sorrow and anger, which ferment in the savage bosom of this man of bloodshed, tended to urge him on to the rash enterprise, which is the consequence and the punishment of his idolatry for a miserable usurper."

"That may be," said Father d'Aigrigny, with an air of constraint: "but I will observe to your reverence, that it was, perhaps, rather dangerous thus to excite Marshal Simon against me."

"Why?" asked Rodin, as he fixed a piercing look upon Father d'Aigrigny.

"Because the marshal, excited beyond all bounds, and remembering only our mutual hate, might seek me out——"

"Well! and what then?"

"Well! he might forget that I am a priest——"

"Oh, you are afraid, are you?" said Rodin, disdainfully, interrupting Father d'Aigrigny.

At the words: "You are afraid," the reverend father almost started from his chair; but recovering his coolness, he answered: "Your reverence is right; yes, I should be afraid under such circumstances; I should be afraid of forgetting that I am a priest, and of remembering too well that I have been a soldier."

"Really?" said Rodin, with sovereign contempt. "You are still no further than that stupid and savage point of honor? Your cassock has not yet extinguished the warlike fire? So that if this brawling swordsman, whose poor, weak head, empty and sonorous as a drum, is so easily turned with the stupid jargon of 'Military honor, oaths,

Napoleon II.'—if this brawling bravo, I say, were to commit some violence against you, it would require a great effort, I suppose, for you to remain calm?"

"It is useless, I think," said Father d'Aigrigny, quite unable to control his agitation, "for your reverence to enter upon such questions."

"As your superior," answered Rodin, severely, "I have the right to ask. If Marshal Simon had lifted his hand against you——"

"Sir," cried the reverend father.

"There are no sirs here—we are only priests," said Rodin, harshly. Father d'Aigrigny held down his head, scarcely able to repress his rage.

"I ask you," continued Rodin, obstinately, "if Marshal Simon had struck you? Is that clear?"

"Enough! in mercy," said Father d'Aigrigny, "enough!"

"Or, if you like it better, had Marshal Simon left the marks of his fingers on your cheek?" resumed Rodin, with the utmost pertinacity.

Father d'Aigrigny, pale as death, ground his teeth in a kind of fury at the very idea of such an insult, while Rodin, who had no doubt his object in asking the question, raised his flabby eyelids, and seemed to watch attentively the significant symptoms revealed in the agitated countenance of the ex-colonel.

At length, recovering partly his presence of mind, Father d'Aigrigny replied, in a forcedly calm tone: "If I were to be exposed to such an insult, I would pray heaven to give me resignation and humility."

"And no doubt heaven would hear your prayers," said Rodin, coldly, satisfied with the trial to which he had just put him. "Besides, you are now warned, and it is not very probable," added he, with a grim smile, "that Marshal Simon will ever return to test your humility. But if he were to return," said Rodin, fixing on the reverend father a long and piercing look, "you would know how to show this brutal swordsman, in spite of all his violence, what resignation and humility there is in a Christian soul!"

Two humble knocks at the door here interrupted the conversation for a moment. A footman entered, bearing a large sealed packet on a salver, which he presented to the princess. After this, he withdrew. Princess de Saint-Dizier, having by a look asked Rodin's permission to open the letter, began to read it—and a cruel satisfaction was soon visible on her face.

"There is hope," cried she, addressing herself to Rodin: "the demand is rigorously legal, and the consequences may be such as we desire. In a word, my niece, may, any day, be exposed to complete destitution. She, who is so extravagant! what a change in her life!"

"We shall then no doubt have some hold on that untamable character," said Rodin, with a meditative air; "for, till now, all has failed in that direction, and one would suppose some kinds of happiness are invulnerable," added the Jesuit, gnawing his flat and dirty nails.

"But, to obtain the result we desire, we must exasperate my niece's pride. It is, therefore, absolutely necessary, that I should see and talk to her," said the Princess de Saint-Dizier, reflecting.

"Mdlle. de Cardoville will refuse this interview," said Father d'Aigrigny.

"Perhaps," replied the princess. "But she is so happy that her audacity must be at its height. Yes, yes—I know her—and I will write in such a manner, that she will come."

"You think so?" asked Rodin, with a doubtful air.

"Do not fear it, father," answered the lady, "she will come. And her pride once brought into play, we may hope a good deal from it."

"We must then act, lady," resumed Rodin; "yes, act promptly. The moment approaches. Hate and suspicion are awake. There is not a moment to lose."

"As for hate," replied the princess, "Mdlle. de Cardoville must have seen to what her lawsuit would lead, about what she calls her illegal detention in a lunatic asylum, and that of the two young ladies in St. Mary's Convent. Thank heaven, we have friends everywhere! I know from good authority, that the case will break down from want of evidence, in spite of the animosity of certain parliamentary magistrates, who shall be well remembered."

"Under these circumstances," replied Rodin, "the departure of the marshal gives us every latitude. We must act immediately on his daughters."

"But how?" said the princess.

"We must see them," resumed Rodin, "talk with them, study them. Then we shall act in consequence."

"But the soldier will not leave them a second," said Father d'Aigrigny.

"Then," replied Rodin, "we must talk to them in presence of the soldier, and get him on our side."

"That hope is idle," cried Father d'Aigrigny. "You do not know the military honor of his character. You do not know this man."

"Don't I know him?" said Rodin, shrugging his shoulders. "Did not Mdlle. de Cardoville present me to him as her liberator, when I denounced you as the soul of the conspiracy? Did I not restore to him his ridiculous imperial relic—his cross of honor—when we met at Dr. Baleinier's? Did I not bring him back the girls from the convent, and place them in the arms of their father?"

"Yes," replied the princess; "but, since that time, my abominable niece has either guessed or discovered all. She told you so herself, father."

"She told me, that she considered me her most mortal enemy," said Rodin. "Be it so. But did she tell the same to the marshal? Has she even mentioned me to him? and if she have done so, has the marshal communicated this circumstance to his soldier? It may be so; but it is by no means sure; in any case, I must ascertain the fact; if the soldier treats me as an enemy, we shall see what is next to be done—but I will first try to be received as a friend."

"When?" asked the princess.

"To-morrow morning," replied Rodin.

"Good heaven, my dear father!" cried the Princess de Saint-Dizier, in alarm; "if this soldier were to treat you as an enemy—beware——"

"I always beware, madame. I have had to face worse enemies than he is," said the Jesuit, showing his black teeth; "the cholera to begin with."

"But he may refuse to see you, and in what way will you then get at Marshal Simon's daughters?" said Father d'Aigrigny.

"I do not yet know," answered Rodin. "But as I intend to do it, I shall find the means."

"Father," said the princess, suddenly, on reflection, "these girls have never seen me, and I might obtain admittance to them, without sending in my name."

"That would be perfectly useless at present, madame, for I must first know what course to take with respect to them. I must see and converse with them, at any cost, and then, after I have fixed my plan, your assistance may be very useful. In any case, please to be ready to-morrow, madame, to accompany me."

"To what place, father?"

"To Marshal Simon's."

"To the marshal's?"

"Not exactly. You will get into your carriage, and I will take a hackney-coach. I will then try to obtain an interview with the girls, and, during that time, you will wait for me at a few yards from the house. If I succeed, and require your aid, I will come and fetch you; I can give you my instructions without any appearance of concert between us."

"I am content, reverend father; but, in truth, I tremble at the thought of your interview with that rough trooper."

"The Lord will watch over his servant, madame!" replied Rodin. "As for you, father," added he, addressing the Abbé d'Aigrigny, "despatch instantly to Vienna the note which is all prepared to announce the departure and speedy arrival of the marshal. Every precaution has been taken. I shall write more fully this evening."

* * * * * * *

The next morning, about eight o'clock, the Princess de Saint-Dizier, in her carriage, and Rodin, in his hackney-coach, took the direction of Marshal Simon's house.

CHAPTER LIII.

HAPPINESS.

Marshal Simon has been absent two days. It is eight o'clock in the morning. Dagobert, walking on tip-toe with the greatest caution, so as not to make the floor creak beneath his tread, crosses the room which leads to the bedchamber of Rose and Blanche, and applies his ear to the door of the apartment. With equal caution, Spoil-sport follows exactly the movements of his master. The countenance of the soldier is uneasy and full of thought. As he approaches the door, he says to himself: "I hope the dear children heard nothing of what happened in the night! It would alarm them, and it is much better that they should not know it at present. It might afflict them sadly, poor dears! and they are so gay, so happy, since they feel sure of their father's love for them. They bore his departure so bravely! I would not for the world that they should know of this unfortunate event."

Then, as he listened, the soldier resumed: "I hear noth-

ing—and yet they are always awake so early. Can it be sorrow?"

Dagobert's reflections were here interrupted by two frank, hearty bursts of laughter, from the interior of the bedroom.

"Come! they are not so sad as I thought," said the soldier, breathing more freely. "Probably they know nothing about it."

Soon, the laughter was again heard with redoubled force, and the soldier, delighted at this gayety, so rare on the part of "his children," was much affected by it: the tears started to his eyes at the thought that the orphans had at length recovered the serenity natural to their age; then, passing from one emotion to the other, still listening at the door, with his body leaning forward, and his hands resting on his knees, Dagobert's lip quivered with an expression of mute joy, and, shaking his head a little, he accompanied with his silent laughter, the increasing hilarity of the young girls. At last, as nothing is so contagious as gayety, and as the worthy soldier was in an ecstasy of joy, he finished by laughing aloud with all his might, without knowing why, and only because Rose and Blanche were laughing. Spoil-sport had never seen his master in such a transport of delight; he looked at him for a while in deep and silent astonishment, and then began to bark in a questioning way.

At this well-known sound, the laughter within suddenly ceased, and a sweet voice, still trembling with joyous emotion, exclaimed: "Is it you, Spoil-sport, that have come to wake us?" The dog understood what was said, wagged his tail, held down his ears, and, approaching close to the door, answered the appeal of his young mistress by a kind of friendly growl.

"Spoil-sport," said Rose, hardly able to restrain her laughter, "you are very early this morning."

"Tell us what o'clock it is, if you please, old fellow?" added Blanche.

"Young ladies, it is past eight," said suddenly the gruff voice of Dagobert, accompanying this piece of humor with a loud laugh.

A cry of gay surprise was heard, and then Rose resumed: "Good-morning, Dagobert."

"Good-morning, my children. You are very lazy to-day, I must tell you."

"It is not our fault. Our dear Augustine has not yet been to call us. We are waiting for her."

"Oh! there it is," said Dagobert to himself, his features once more assuming an expression of anxiety. Then he returned aloud, in a tone of some embarrassment, for the worthy man was no hand at a falsehood: "My children, your companion went out this morning—very early. She is gone to the country—on business—she will not return for some days—so you had better get up by yourselves for to-day."

"Our good Madame Augustine!" exclaimed Blanche, with interest. "I hope it is nothing bad that has made her leave so suddenly—eh, Dagobert?"

"No, no—not at all—only business," answered the soldier. "To see one of her relations."

"Oh, so much the better!" said Rose. "Well, Dagobert, when we call you can come in."

"I will come back in a quarter of an hour," said the soldier as he withdrew; and he thought to himself: "I must lecture that fool Loony—for he is so stupid, and so fond of talking, that he will let it all out."

The name of the pretended simpleton will serve as a natural transition, to inform the reader of the cause of the hilarity of the sisters. They were laughing at the numberless absurdities of the idiot. The girls rose and dressed themselves, each serving as lady's-maid to the other. Rose had combed and arranged Blanche's hair; it was now Blanche's turn to do the same for her sister. Thus occupied, they formed a charming picture. Rose was seated before the dressing-table; her sister, standing behind her, was smoothing her beautiful brown hair. Happy age! so little removed from childhood, that present joy instantly obliterates the traces of past sorrow! But the sisters felt more than joy; it was happiness, deep and unalterable, for their father loved them, and their happiness was a delight, and not a pain to him. Assured of the affection of his children, he, also, thanks to them, no longer feared any grief. To those three beings, thus certain of their mutual love, what was a momentary separation? Having explained this, we shall understand the innocent gayety of the sisters, notwithstanding their father's departure, and the happy, joyous expression, which now filled with animation their charming faces, on which the late fading rose had begun once more to bloom. Their faith in the future gave to their countenances something resolute and decisive, which added a degree of piquancy to the beauty of their enchanting features.

Blanche, in smoothing her sister's hair, let fall the comb,

and, as she was stooping to pick it up, Rose anticipated her, saying: "If it had been broken, we would have put it into the handle-basket."

Then the two laughed merrily at this expression, which reminded them of an admirable piece of folly on the part of Loony.

The supposed simpleton had broken the handle of a cup, and when the governess of the young ladies had reprimanded him for his carelessness, he had answered: "Never mind, madame; I have put it into the handle-basket."

"The handle-basket, what is that?"

"Yes, madame; it is where I keep all the handles I break off the things!"

"Dear me!" said Rose, drying her eyes; "how silly it is to laugh at such foolishness."

"It is so droll," replied Blanche; "how can we help it?"

"All I regret is, that father cannot hear us laugh."

"He was so happy to see us gay!"

"We must write to him to-day, the story of the handle-basket."

"And that of the feather-brush, to show that, according to promise, we kept up our spirits during his absence."

"Write to him, sister? no, he is to write to us, and we are not to answer his letters."

"True! well then, I have an idea. Let us address letters to him here, Dagobert can put them into the post, and, on his return, our father will read our correspondence."

"That will be charming! What nonsense we will write to him, since he takes pleasure in it!"

"And we, too, like to amuse ourselves."

"Oh, certainly! father's last words have given us so much courage."

"As I listened to them, I felt quite reconciled to his going."

"When he said to us: 'My children, I will confide in you all I can. I go to fulfil a sacred duty, and I must be absent for some time; for though, when I was blind enough to doubt your affection, I could not make up my mind to leave you, my conscience was by no means tranquil. Grief takes such an effect on us, that I had not the strength to come to a decision, and my days were passed in painful hesitation. But now that I am certain of your tenderness, all this irresolution has ceased, and I understand how one duty is not to be sacrificed to another, and that I have to

perform two duties at once, both equally sacred; and this I now do with joy, and delight, and courage!'"

"Go on, sister!" cried Blanche, rising to draw nearer to Rose. "I think I hear our father when I remember those words, which must console and support us during his absence."

"And then our father continued: 'Instead of grieving at my departure, you should rejoice in it, you should be proud and happy. I go to perform a good and generous act. Fancy to yourselves, that there is somewhere a poor orphan, oppressed and abandoned by all—and that the father of that orphan was once my benefactor, and that I had promised him to protect his son—and that the life of that son is now in peril—tell me, my children, would you regret that I should leave you to fly to the aid of such an orphan?'——"

"'No, no, brave father!' we answered: 'we should not then be your daughters!'" continued Rose, with enthusiasm. "'Count upon us! We should be indeed unhappy if we thought that our sorrow could deprive thee of thy courage. Go! and every day we will say to ourselves proudly, "It was to perform a great and noble duty that our father left us—we can wait calmly for his return."'"

"How that idea of duty sustains one, sister!" resumed Rose, with growing enthusiasm. "It gave our father the couage to leave us without regret, and to us the courage to bear his absence gayly!"

"And then, how calm we are now! Those mournful dreams, which seemed to portend such sad events, no longer afflict us."

"I tell you, sister, this time we are really happy once for all."

"And then, do you feel like me? I fancy, that I am stronger and more courageous and that I could brave every danger."

"I should think so! We are strong enough now. Our father in the midst, you on one side, I on the other——"

"Dagobert in the vanguard, and Spoil-sport in the rear! Then the army will be complete, and let 'em come on by thousands!" added a gruff, but jovial voice, interrupting the girl, as Dagobert appeared at the half-open door of the room. It was worth looking at his face, radiant with joy; for the old fellow had somewhat indiscreetly been listening to the conversation.

"Oh! you were listening, Paul Pry!" said Rose gayly, as

she entered the adjoining room with her sister, and both affectionately embraced the soldier.

"To be sure, I was listening; and I only regretted not to have ears as large as Spoil-sport's! Brave, good girls! that's how I like to see you—bold as brass, and saying to care and sorrow: 'Right about face! march! go to the devil!'"

"He will want to make us swear, now," said Rose to her sister, laughing with all her might.

"Well! now and then, it does no harm," said the soldier; "it relieves and calms one, when if one could not swear by five hundred thousand de——"

"That's enough!" said Rose, covering with her pretty hand the gray moustache, so as to stop Dagobert in his speech. "If Madame Augustine heard you——"

"Our poor governess! so mild and timid," resumed Blanche. "How you would frighten her!"

"Yes," said Dagobert, as he tried to conceal his rising embarrassment; "but she does not hear us. She is gone into the country."

"Good, worthy woman!" replied Blanche, with interest. "She said something of you, which shows her excellent heart."

"Certainly," resumed Rose; "for she said to us, in speaking of you, 'Ah, young ladies! my affection must appear very little, compared with M. Dagobert's. But I feel that I also have the right to devote myself for you.'"

"No doubt, no doubt! she has a heart of gold," answered Dagobert. Then he added to himself, "It's as if they did it on purpose, to bring the conversation back to this poor woman."

"Father made a good choice," continued Rose. "She is the widow of an old officer, who was with him in the wars."

"When we were out of spirits," said Blanche, "you should have seen her uneasiness and grief, and how earnestly she set about consoling us."

"I have seen the tears in her eyes when she looked at us," resumed Rose. "Oh! she loves us tenderly, and we return her affection. With regard to that, Dagobert, we have a plan as soon as our father comes back."

"Be quiet, sister!" said Blanche, laughing. "Dagobert will not keep our secret."

"He!"

"Will you keep it for us, Dagobert?"

"I tell you what," said the soldier, more and more embarrassed; "you had better not tell it me."

"What! can you keep nothing from Madame Augustine?"

"Ah, Dagobert! Dagobert!" said Blanche, gayly holding up her finger at the soldier; "I suspect you very much of paying court to our governess."

"I pay court?" said the soldier—and the expression of his face was so rueful, as he pronounced these words, that the two sisters burst out laughing.

Their hilarity was at its height when the door opened, and Loony advanced into the room announcing, with a loud voice, "M. Rodin!" In fact, the Jesuit glided almost imperceptibly into the apartment, as if to take possession of the ground. Once there, he thought the game his own, and his reptile eyes sparkled with joy. It would be difficult to paint the surprise of the two sisters, and the anger of the soldier, at this unexpected visit.

Rushing upon Loony, Dagobert seized him by the collar, and exclaimed: "Who gave you leave to introduce any one here, without my permission?"

"Pardon, M. Dagobert!" said Loony, throwing himself on his knees, and clasping his hands with an air of idiotic entreaty.

"Leave the room!—and you too!" added the soldier, with a menacing gesture, as he turned towards Rodin, who had already approached the girls, with a paternal smile on his countenance.

"I am at your orders, my dear sir," said the priest, humbly; and he made a low bow, but without stirring from the spot.

"Will you go?" cried the soldier to Loony, who was still kneeling, and who, thanks to the advantages of this position, was able to utter a certain number of words before Dagobert could remove him.

"M. Dagobert," said Loony in a doleful voice, "I beg pardon for bringing up the gentleman without leave; but, alas, my head is turned, because of the misfortune that happened to Madame Augustine."

"What misfortune?" cried Rose and Blanche together, as they advanced anxiously towards Loony.

"Will you go?" thundered Dagobert, shaking the servant by the collar, to force him to rise.

"Speak—speak!" said Blanche, interposing between the soldier and his prey. "What has happened to Madame Augustine?"

"Oh," shouted Loony, in spite of the cuffs of the soldier.

"Madame Augustine was attacked in the night with cholera, and taken——"

He was unable to finish. Dagobert struck him a tremendous blow with his fist, right on the jaw, and, putting forth his still formidable strength, the old horse-grenadier lifted him to his legs, and with one violent kick bestowed on the lower part of his back, sent him rolling into the ante-chamber.

Then turning to Rodin, with flushed cheek and sparkling eye, Dagobert pointed to the door with an expressive gesture, and said in an angry voice: "Now, be off with you—and that quickly!"

"I must pay my respects another time, my dear sir," said Rodin, as he retired towards the door, bowing to the young girls.

CHAPTER LIV.

DUTY.

Rodin, retreating slowly before the fire of Dagobert's angry looks, walked backwards to the door, casting oblique but piercing glances at the orphans, who were visibly affected by the servant's intentional indiscretion. (Dagobert had ordered him not to speak before the girls of the illness of their governess, and that was quite enough to induce the simpleton to take the first opportunity of doing so.)

Rose hastily approached the soldier, and said to him: "Is it true—is it really true, that poor Madame Augustine has been attacked with the cholera?"

"No—I do not know—I cannot tell," replied the soldier, hesitating; "besides, what is it to you?"

"Dagobert, you would conceal from us a calamity," said Blanche. "I remember now your embarrassment, when we spoke to you of our governess."

"If she is ill, we ought not to abandon her. She had pity on our sorrows; we ought to pity her sufferings."

"Come, sister; come to her room," said Blanche, advancing towards the door, where Rodin had stopped short, and stood listening with growing attention to this unexpected scene, which seemed to give him ample food for thought.

"You will not leave this room," said the soldier, sternly, addressing the two sisters.

"Dagobert," replied Rose, firmly, "it is a sacred duty, and it would be cowardice not to fulfil it."

"I tell you that you shall not leave the room," said the soldier, stamping his foot with impatience.

"Dagobert," replied Blanche, with as resolute an air as her sister's, and with a kind of enthusiasm which brought the blood to her fair cheek, "our father, when he left us, give us an admirable example of devotion and duty. He would not forgive us were we to forget the lesson."

"What," cried Dagobert, in a rage, and advancing towards the sisters to prevent their quitting the apartment; "you think that if your governess had the cholera, I would let you go to her under the pretext of duty?—Your duty is to live, to live happy, for your father's sake—and for mine into the bargain—so not a word more of such folly!"

"We can run no danger by going to our governess in her room," said Rose.

"And if there were danger," added Blanche, "we ought not to hesitate. So, Dagobert, be good! and let us pass."

Rodin, who had listened to what precedes, with sustained attention, suddenly started, as if a thought had struck him; his eye shone brightly, and an expression of fatal joy illumined his countenance.

"Dagobert, do not refuse!" said Blanche. "You would do for us what you reproach us with wishing to do for another."

Dagobert had, as it were, till now, stood in the path of the Jesuit and the twins by keeping close to the door; but, after a moment's reflection, he shrugged his shoulders, stepped to one side, and said calmly: "I was an old fool. Come, young ladies; if you find Madame Augustine in the house, I will allow you to remain with her."

Surprised at these words, the girls stood motionless and irresolute.

"If our governess is not here, where is she, then?" said Rose.

"You think, perhaps, that I am going to tell you in the excitement in which you are!"

"She is dead!" cried Rose, growing pale.

"No, no—be calm," said the soldier, hastily; "I swear to you, by your father's honor, that she is not dead. At the first appearance of the disorder, she begged to be removed from the house, fearing the contagion for those in it."

"Good and courageous woman!" said Rose, tenderly. "And you will not allow us——"

"I will not allow you to go out, even if I have to lock you up in your room," cried the soldier, again stamping with rage; then, remembering that the blunderhead's indiscretion was the sole cause of this unfortunate incident, he added, with concentrated fury: "Oh! I will break my stick upon that rascal's back."

So saying, he turned towards the door, where Rodin still stood, silent and attentive, dissembling with habitual impassibility the fatal hopes he had just conceived in his brain. The girls, no longer doubting the removal of their governess, and convinced that Dagobert would not tell them whither they had conveyed her, remained pensive and sad.

At sight of the priest, whom he had forgotten for the moment, the soldier's rage increased, and he said to him abruptly: "Are you still there?"

"I would merely observe to you, my dear sir," said Rodin, with that air of perfect good nature which he knew so well how to assume, "that you were standing before the door, which naturally prevented me from going out."

"Well, now nothing prevents you—so file off!"

"Certainly, I will file off, if you wish it, my dear sir; though I think I have some reason to be surprised at such a reception."

"It is no reception at all—so begone!"

"I had come, my dear sir, to speak to you——"

"I have no time for talking."

"Upon business of great importance."

"I have no other business of importance than to remain with these children."

"Very good, my dear sir," said Rodin, pausing on the threshold. I will not disturb you any longer; excuse my indiscretion. The bearer of excellent news from Marshal Simon, I came——"

"News from our father!" cried Rose, drawing nearer to Rodin.

"Oh, speak, speak, sir!" added Blanche.

"You have news of the marshal!" said Dagobert, glancing suspiciously at Rodin. "Pray, what is this news?"

But Rodin, without immediately answering the question, returned from the threshold into the room, and, contemplating Rose and Blanche by turns with admiration, he resumed: "What happiness for me, to be able to bring some pleasure to these dear young ladies. They are even as I left them, graceful, and fair, and charming—only less sad

than on the day when I fetched them from the gloomy convent in which they were kept prisoners, to restore them to the arms of their glorious father!"

"That was their place, and this is not yours," said Dagobert, harshly, still holding the door open behind Rodin.

"Confess, at least, that I was not so much out of place at Dr. Baleinier's," said the Jesuit, with a cunning air. "You know, for it was there that I restored to you the noble imperial cross you so much regretted—the day when that good Mdlle. de Cardoville only prevented you from strangling me by telling you what I was her liberator. Aye! it was just as I have the honor of stating, young ladies," added Rodin, with a smile; "this brave soldier was very near strangling me, for, be it said without offence, he has, in spite of his age, a grasp of iron. Ha, ha! the Prussians and Cossacks must know that better than I!"

These few words reminded Dagobert and the twins of the services which Rodin had really rendered them; and though the marshal had heard Mdlle. de Cardoville speak of Rodin as of a very dangerous man, he had forgotten, in the midst of so many anxieties, to communicate this circumstance to Dagobert. But this latter, warned by experience, felt, in spite of favorable appearances, a secret aversion for the Jesuit; so he replied abruptly: "The strength of my grasp has nothing to do with the matter."

"If I allude to that little innocent playfulness on your part, my dear sir," said Rodin, in his softest tone, approaching the two sisters with a wriggle which was peculiar to him; "if I allude to it, you see, it was suggested by the involuntary recollection of the little services I was happy enough to render you." Dagobert looked fixedly at Rodin, who instantly veiled his glance beneath his flabby eyelids.

"First of all," said the soldier, after a moment's silence, "a true man never speaks of the services he has rendered, and you come back three times to the subject."

"But, Dagobert," whispered Rose, "if he bring news of our father?"

The soldier made a sign, as if to beg the girl to let him speak, and resumed, looking full at Rodin: "You are cunning, but I'm no raw recruit."

"I cunning?" said Rodin, with a sanctified air.

"Yes, very. You think to puzzle me with your fine phrases; but I'm not to be caught in that way. Just listen to me. Some of your band of black-gowns stole my cross; you returned it to me. Some of the same band carried off

these children; you brought them back. It is also true that you denounced the renegade D'Aigrigny. But all this only proves two things: first, that you were vile enough to be the accomplice of these scoundrels; and secondly, that, having been their accomplice, you were base enough to betray them. Now, those two facts are equally bad, and I suspect you most furiously. So march off at once; your presence is not good for these children."

"But, my dear sir——"

"I will have no buts," answered Dagobert, in an angry voice. "When a man of your look does good, it is only to hide some evil; and one must be on guard."

"I understand your suspicions," said Rodin coolly, hiding his growing disappointment, for he had hoped it would have been easy to coax the soldier; "but, if you reflect, what interest have I in deceiving you? And in what should the deception consist?"

"You have some interest or other in persisting to remain here, when I tell you to go away."

"I have already had the honor of informing you of the object of my visit, my dear sir."

"To bring news of Marshal Simon?"

"That is exactly the case. I am happy enough to have news of the marshal. Yes, my dear young ladies," added Rodin, as he again approached the two sisters, to recover, as it were, the ground he had lost, "I have news of your glorious father!"

"Then come to my room directly, and you can tell it to me," replied Dagobert.

"What! you would be cruel enough to deprive these dear ladies of the pleasure——"

"By heaven, sir!" cried Dagobert, in a voice of thunder, "you will make me forget myself. I should be sorry to fling a man of your age down the stairs. Will you be gone?"

"Well, well," said Rodin mildly, "do not be angry with a poor old man. I am really not worth the trouble. I will go with you to your room, and tell you what I have to communicate. You will repent not having let me speak before these dear young ladies; but that will be your punishment, naughty man!"

So saying, Rodin again bowed very low, and, concealing his rage and vexation, left the room before Dagobert, who made a sign to the two sisters, and then followed, closing the door after him.

"What news of our father, Dagobert?" said Rose anxiously, when the soldier returned, after a quarter of an hour's absence.

"Well, that old conjurer knows that the marshal set out in good spirits, and he seems acquainted with M. Robert. How could he be informed of all this? I cannot tell," added the soldier, with a thoughtful air; "but it is only another reason to be on one's guard against him."

"But what news of our father?" asked Rose.

"One of that old rascal's friends (I think him a rascal still) knows your father, he tells me, and met him five-and-twenty leagues from here. Knowing that this man was coming to Paris, the marshal charged him to let you know that he was in perfect health, and hoped soon to see you again."

"Oh, what happiness!" cried Rose.

"You see, you were wrong to suspect the poor old man, Dagobert," added Blanche. "You treated him so harshly!"

"Possibly so; but I am not sorry for it."

"And why?"

"I have my reasons; and one of the best is that, when I saw him come in, and go sidling and creeping round about us, I felt chilled to the marrow of my bones, without knowing why. Had I seen a serpent crawling towards you, I should not have been more frightened. I knew, of course, that he could not hurt you in my presence; but I tell you, my children, in spite of the services he has no doubt rendered us, it was all I could do to refrain from throwing him out of window. Now, this manner of proving my gratitude is not natural, and one must be on one's guard against people who inspire us with such ideas."

"Good Dagobert, it is your affection for us that makes you so suspicious," said Rose, in a coaxing tone; "it proves how much you love us."

CHAPTER LV.

THE IMPROVISED HOSPITAL.

Among a great number of temporary hospitals opened at the time of the cholera in every quarter of Paris, one had been established on the ground-floor of a large house in the Rue du Mont-Blanc. The vacant apartments had been generously placed by their proprietor at the disposal of the

authorities; and to this place were carried a number of persons, who, being suddenly attacked with the contagion, were considered in too dangerous a state to be removed to the principal hospitals.

Two days had elapsed since Rodin's visit to Marshal Simon's daughters. Shortly after he had been expelled, the Princess de Saint-Dizier had entered to see them, under the cloak of being a house-to-house visitor to collect funds for the cholera sufferers.

Choosing the moment when Dagobert, deceived by her lady-like demeanor, had withdrawn, she counselled the twins that it was their duty to go and see their governess, whom she stated to be in the hospital we now describe.

It was about ten o'clock in the morning. The persons who had watched during the night by the sick people, in the hospital established in the Rue du Mont-Blanc, were about to be relieved by other voluntary assistants.

"Well, gentlemen," said one of those newly arrived, "how are we getting on? Has there been any decrease last night in the number of the sick?

"Unfortunately, no; but the doctors think the contagion has reached its height."

"Then there is some hope of seeing it decrease."

"And have any of the gentlemen, whose places we come to take, been attacked by the disease?"

"We came eleven strong last night; we are only nine now."

"That is bad. Were these two persons taken off rapidly?"

"One of the victims, a young man of twenty-five years of age, a cavalry officer on furlough, was struck as it were by lightning. In less then a quarter of an hour he was dead. Though such facts are frequent, we were speechless with horror."

"Poor young man!"

"He had a word of cordial encouragement and hope for every one. He had so far succeeded in raising the spirits of the patients, that some of them, who were less affected by the cholera than by the fear of it, were able to quit the hospital nearly well."

"What a pity! So good a young man! Well, he died gloriously; it requires as much courage as on the field of battle."

"He had only one rival in zeal and courage, and that is a young priest, with an angelic countenance, whom they call

the Abbé Gabriel. He is indefatigable ; he hardly takes an hour's rest, but runs from one to the other, and offers himself to everybody. He forgets nothing. The consolations which he offers come from the depths of his soul, and are not mere formalities in the way of his profession. No, no, I saw him weep over a poor woman, whose eyes he had closed after a dreadful agony. Oh, if all priests were like him ! "

" No doubt, a good priest is most worthy of respect. But who is the other victim of last night ? "

" Oh ! his death was frightful. Do not speak of it. I have still the horrible scene before my eyes."

" A sudden attack of cholera ? "

" If it had only been the contagion, I should not so shudder at the remembrance."

" What then did he die of ? "

" It is a string of horrors. Three days ago, they brought here a man, who was supposed to be only attacked with cholera. You have no doubt heard speak of this personage. He is the lion-tamer, that drew all Paris to the Porte-Saint-Martin. "

" I know the man you mean. Called Morok. He performed a kind of play with a tame panther. "

" Exactly so ; I was myself present at a similar scene, in which a stranger, an Indian, in consequence of a wager, it was said at the time, jumped upon the stage and killed the panther. "

" Well, this Morok, brought here as a cholera-patient, and indeed with all the symptoms of the contagion, soon showed signs of a still more frightful malady. "

" And this was——"

" Hydrophobia."

" Did he become mad ! "

" Yes ; he confessed, that he had been bitten a few days before by one of the mastiffs in his menagerie; unfortunately, we only learnt this circumstance after the terrible attack, which cost the life of the poor fellow we deplore."

" How did it happen, then ? "

" Morok was in a room with three other patients. Suddenly seized with a sort of furious delirium, he rose, uttering ferocious cries, and rushed raving mad into the passage. Our poor friend made an attempt to stop him. This kind of resistance increased the frenzy of Morok, who threw himself on the man that crossed his path, and, tearing him with his teeth, fell down in horrible convulsions."

"Oh! you are right. 'Twas indeed frightful. And, notwithstanding every assistance, this victim of Morok's——"

"Died during the night, in dreadful agony; for the shock had been so violent, that brain-fever almost instantly declared itself."

"And is Morok dead?"

"I do not know. He was to be taken to another hospital, after being fast bound in the state of weakness which generally succeeds the fit. But, till he can be removed he has been confined in a room upstairs."

"But he cannot recover."

"I should think he must be dead by this time. The doctors did not give him twenty-four hours to live."

The persons engaged in this conversation were standing in an ante-chamber on the ground-floor, in which usually assembled those who came to offer their voluntary aid to the sick. One door of this room communicated with the rest of the hospital, and the other with the passage that opened upon the courtyard.

"Dear me!" said one of the two speakers, looking through the window. "See what two charming girls have just got out of that elegant carriage. How much alike they are! Such a resemblance is indeed extraordinary."

"No doubt they are twins. Poor young girls! dressed in mourning. They have perhaps lost father or mother."

"One would imagine they are coming this way."

"Yes, they are coming up the steps."

And indeed Rose and Blanche soon entered the ante-chamber, with a timid, anxious air, though a sort of feverish excitement was visible in their looks. One of the two men that were talking together, moved by the embarrassment of the girls, advanced towards them, and said, in a tone of attentive politeness: "Is there anything I can do for you, ladies?"

"Is not this, sir," replied Rose, "the infirmary of the Rue du Mont-Blanc?"

"Yes, miss."

"A lady, called Madame Augustine du Tremblay, was brought here, we are told, about two days ago. Could we see her?"

"I would observe to you, miss, that there is some danger in entering the sick-wards."

"It is a dear friend that we wish to see," answered Rose, in a mild and firm tone, which sufficiently expressed that she was determined to brave the danger.

"I cannot be sure, miss," resumed the other, "that the person you seek is here; but, if you will take the trouble to walk into this room on the left, you will find there the good Sister Martha; she has the care of the women's wards, and will give you all the information you can desire."

"Thank you, sir," said Blanche, with a graceful bow; and she and her sister entered together the apartment which had been pointed out to them.

"They are really charming," said the man, looking after the two sisters, who soon disappeared from his view. "It would be a great pity if——"

He was unable to finish. A frightful tumult, mingled with cries of alarm and horror, rose suddenly from the adjoining rooms. Almost instantly, two doors were thrown open, and a number of the sick, half-naked, pale, fleshless, and their features convulsed with terror, rushed into the antechamber, exclaiming: "Help! help! the madman!" It is impossible to paint the scene of despairing and furious confusion which followed this panic of so many affrighted wretches, flying to the only other door, to escape from the peril they dreaded, and there, struggling and trampling on each other to pass through the narrow entrance.

At the moment when the last of these unhappy creatures succeeded in reaching the door, dragging himself along upon his bleeding hands, for he had been thrown down and almost crushed in the confusion—Morok, the object of so much terror—Morok himself appeared. He was a horrible sight. With the exception of a rag bound about his middle, his wan form was entirely naked, and from his bare legs still hung the remnants of the cords he had just broken. His thick, yellow hair stood almost on end, his beard bristled, his savage eyes rolled full of blood in their orbits, and shone with a glassy brightness; his lips were covered with foam; from time to time, he uttered hoarse, guttural cries. The veins, visible on his iron limbs, were swollen almost to bursting. He bounded like a wild beast, and stretched out before him his bony and quivering hands. At the moment Morok reached the doorway, by which those he pursued made their escape, some persons, attracted by the noise, managed to close this door from without, whilst others secured that which communicated with the sick-ward.

Morok thus found himself a prisoner. He ran to the window to force it open, and throw himself into the courtyard. But, stopping suddenly, he drew back from the glittering panes, seized with that invincible horror which all the victims

of hydrophobia feel at the sight of any shining object, particularly glass. The unfortunate creatures whom he had pursued, saw him from the courtyard exhausting himself in furious efforts to open the doors that just had been closed upon him. Then, perceiving the inutility of his attempts, he uttered savage cries, and rushed furiously round the room, like a wild beast that seeks in vain to escape from its cage.

But, suddenly, those spectators of this scene, who had approached nearest to the window, uttered a loud exclamation of fear and anguish. Morok had perceived the little door which led to the closet occupied by Sister Martha, where Rose and Blanche had entered a few minutes before. Hoping to get out by this way, Morok drew the door violently towards him, and succeeded in half opening it, notwithstanding the resistance he experienced from the inside. For an instant, the affrighted crowd saw the stiffened arms of Sister Martha and the orphans, clinging to the door, and holding it back with all their might.

CHAPTER LVI.

HYDROPHOBIA.

When the sick people, assembled in the courtyard, saw the desperate efforts of Morok to force the door of the room which contained Sister Martha and the orphans, their fright redoubled. "It is all over with Sister Martha!" cried they.

"The door will give way."

"And the closet has no other entrance."

"There are two young girls in mourning with her."

"Come! we must not leave these poor women to encounter the madman. Follow me, friends!" cried generously one of the spectators, who was still blessed with health, and he rushed towards the steps to return to the ante-chamber.

"It's too late! it's only exposing yourself in vain," cried many persons, holding him back by force.

At this moment, voices were heard, exclaiming: "Here is the Abbé Gabriel."

"He is coming downstairs. He has heard the noise."

"He is asking what is the matter."

"What will he do?"

Gabriel, occupied with a dying person in a neighboring room, had, indeed, just learned that Morok, having broken

his bonds, had succeeded in escaping from the chamber in which he had been temporarily confined. Foreseeing the terrible dangers which might result from the escape of the lion-tamer, the missionary consulted only his courage, and hastened down, in the hope of preventing greater misfortunes. In obedience to his orders, an attendant followed him, bearing a brazier full of hot cinders, on which lay several irons, at a white heat, used by the doctors for cauterizing, in desperate cases of cholera.

The angelic countenance of Gabriel was very pale; but calm intrepidity shone upon his noble brow. Hastily crossing the passage, and making his way through the crowd, he went straight to the ante-chamber door. As he approached it, one of the sick people said to him, in a lamentable voice; "Ah, sir! it is all over. Those who can see through the window say that Sister Martha is lost."

Gabriel made no answer, but grasped the key of the door. Before entering the room, however, he turned to the attendant, and said to him in a firm voice: "Are the irons of a white heat?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then wait here, and be ready. As for you, my friends," he added, turning to some of the sick, who shuddered with terror, "as soon as I enter shut the door after me. I will answer for the rest. And you, friend, only bring your irons when I call."

And the young missionary turned the key in the lock. At this juncture, a cry of alarm, pity, and admiration rose from every lip, and the spectators drew back from the door, with an involuntary feeling of fear. Raising his eyes to heaven, as if to invoke its assistance at this terrible moment, Gabriel pushed open the door, and immediately closed it behind him. He was alone with Morok.

The lion-tamer, by a last furious effort, had almost succeeded in opening the door, to which Sister Martha and the orphans were clinging, in a fit of terror, uttering piercing cries. At the sound of Gabriel's footsteps, Morok turned round suddenly. Then, instead of continuing his attack on the closet, he sprang, with a roar and a bound, upon the new-comer.

During this time, Sister Martha and the orphans, not knowing the cause of the sudden retreat of their assailant, took advantage of the opportunity to close and bolt the door, and thus placed themselves in security from a new attack. Morok, with haggard eye, and teeth convulsively

clinched, had rushed upon Gabriel, his hands extended to seize him by the throat. The missionary stood the shock valiantly. Guessing, at a glance, the intention of his adversary, he seized him by the wrists as he advanced, and, holding him back, bent him down violently with a vigorous hand. For a second, Morok and Gabriel remained mute, breathless, motionless, gazing on each other; then the missionary strove to conquer the efforts of the madman, who, with violent jerks, attempted to throw himself upon him, and to seize and tear him with his teeth.

Suddenly the lion-tamer's strength seemed to fail, his knees quivered, his livid head sank upon his shoulder, his eyes closed. The missionary, supposing that a momentary weakness had succeeded to the fit of rage, and that the wretch was about to fall, relaxed his hold in order to lend him assistance. But no sooner did he feel himself at liberty, thanks to his crafty device, than Morok flung himself furiously upon Gabriel. Surprised by this sudden attack, the latter stumbled, and at once felt himself clasped in the iron arms of the madman. Yet, with redoubled strength and energy, struggling breast to breast, foot to foot, the missionary in his turn succeeded in tripping up his adversary, and, throwing him with a vigorous effort, again seized his hands, and now held him down beneath his knee. Having thus completely mastered him, Gabriel turned his head to call for assistance, when Morok, by a desperate strain, succeeded in raising himself a little, and seized with his teeth the left arm of the missionary. At this sharp, deep, horrible bite, which penetrated to the very bone, Gabriel could not restrain a scream of anguish and horror. He strove in vain to disengage himself, for his arm was held fast, as in a vice, between the firm-set jaws of Morok.

This frightful scene had lasted less time than it has taken in the description, when suddenly the door leading to the passage was violently opened, and several courageous men, who had learned from the patients to what danger the young priest was exposed, came rushing to his assistance, in spite of his recommendation not to enter till he should call. The attendant was amongst the number, with the brazier and the hot irons. Gabriel, as soon as he perceived him, said to him in an agitated voice: "Quick, friend! your iron. Thank God I had thought of that."

One of the men who had entered the room was luckily provided with a blanket; and the moment the missionary succeeded in wresting his arm from the clinched teeth of

Morok, whom he still held down with his knee, this blanket was thrown over the madman's head, so that he could now be held and bound without danger, notwithstanding his desperate resistance. Then Gabriel rose, tore open the sleeve of his cassock, and laying bare his left arm, on which a deep bite was visible, bleeding, of a bluish color, he beckoned the attendant to draw near, seized one of the hot irons, and, with a firm and sure hand, twice applied the burning metal to the wound, with a calm heroism which struck all the spectators with admiration. But soon so many various emotions, intrepidly sustained, were followed by a natural reaction. Large drops of sweat stood upon Gabriel's brow; his long light hair clung to his temples; he grew deadly pale, reeled, lost his senses, and was carried into the next room to receive immediate attention.

* * * * * * *

An accidental circumstance, likely enough to occur, had converted one of the Princess de Saint-Dizier's falsehoods into a truth. To induce the orphans to go the hospital, she had told them Gabriel was there, which at the time she was far from believing. On the contrary, she would have wished to prevent a meeting, which, from the attachment of the missionary to the girls, might interfere with her projects. A little while after the terrible scene we have just related, Rose and Blanche, accompanied by Sister Martha, entered a vast room, of a strange and fatal aspect, containing a number of women who had suddenly been seized with cholera.

These immense apartments, generously supplied for the purpose of a temporary hospital, had been furnished with excessive luxury. The room now occupied by the sick women, of whom we speak, had been used for a ball-room. The white panels glittered with sumptuous gilding, and magnificent pier-glasses occupied the space between the windows, through which could be seen the fresh verdure of a pleasant garden, smiling beneath the influence of budding May. In the midst of all this gilded luxury, on a rich, inlaid floor of costly woods, were seen arranged in regular order four rows of beds, of every shape and kind, from the humble truckle-bed to the handsome couch in carved mahogany.

This long room was divided into two compartments by a temporary partition, four or five feet in height. They had thus been able to manage the four rows of beds. This partition finished at some little distance from either end of the

room, so as to leave an open space without beds, for the volunteer attendants, when the sick did not require their aid. At one of these extremities of the room was a lofty and magnificent marble chimney piece, ornamented with gilt bronze. On the fire beneath, various drinks were brewing for the patients. To complete the singular picture, women of every class took their turns in attending upon the sick, to whose sighs and groans they always responded with consoling words of hope and pity. Such was the place, strange and mournful, that Rose and Blanche entered together, hand in hand, a short time after Gabriel had displayed such heroic courage in the struggle against Morok. Sister Martha accompanied Marshal Simon's daughters. After speaking a few words to them in a whisper, she pointed out to them the two divisions in which the beds were arranged, and herself went to the other end of the room to give some orders.

The orphans, still under the impression of the terrible danger from which Gabriel had rescued them without their knowing it, were both excessively pale; yet their eyes were expressive of firm resolution. They had determined not only to perform what they considered an imperative duty, but to prove themselves worthy of their valiant father; they were acting too for their mother's sake, since they had been told that, dying in Siberia without receiving the sacrament, her eternal felicity might depend on the proofs they gave of Christian devotion. Need we add that the Princess de Saint-Dizier, following the advice of Rodin, had, in a second interview, skilfully brought about without the knowledge of Dagobert, taken advantage of the excitable qualities of these poor, confiding, simple, and generous souls, by a fatal exaggeration of the most noble and courageous sentiments. The orphans having asked Sister Martha if Madame Augustine du Tremblay had been brought to this asylum within the last three days, that person had answered, that she really did not know, but, if they would go through the women's wards, it would be easy for them to ascertain. For the abominable hypocrite, who, in conjunction with Rodin, had sent these two children to encounter a mortal peril, had told an impudent falsehood when she affirmed that their governess had been removed to this hospital. During their exile, and their toilsome journey with Dagobert, the sisters had been exposed to many hard trials. But never had they witnessed so sad a spectacle as that which now offered itself to their view.

The long row of beds, on which so many poor creatures writhed in agony, some uttering deep groans, some only a dull rattle in the throat, some raving in the delirium of fever, or calling on those from whom they were about to part forever—these frightful sights and sounds, which are too much even for brave men, would inevitably (such was the execrable design of Rodin and his accomplices) make a fatal impression on these young girls, urged by the most generous motives to undertake this perilous visit. And then —sad memory! which awoke, in all its deep and poignant bitterness, by the side of the first beds they came to—it was of this very malady, the Cholera, that their mother had died a painful death. Fancy the twins entering this vast room, of so fearful an aspect, and, already much shaken by the terror which Morok had inspired, pursuing their search in the midst of these unfortunate creatures, whose dying pangs reminded them every instant of the dying agony of their mother! For a moment, at sight of the funereal hall, Rose and Blanche had felt their resolution fail them. A black presentiment made them regret their heroic imprudence; and, moreover, since several minutes they had begun to feel an icy shudder, and painful shootings across the temples; but, attributing these symptoms to the fright occasioned by Morok, their good and valiant natures soon stifled all these fears. They exchanged glances of affection, their courage revived, and both of them—Rose on one side of the partition, and Blanche on the other—proceeded with their painful task. Gabriel, carried to the doctors' private room, had soon recovered his senses. Thanks to his courage and presence of mind, his wound, cauterized in time, could have no dangerous consequences. As soon as it was dressed he insisted on returning to the women's ward, where he had been offering pious consolations to a dying person at the moment they had come to inform him of the frightful danger caused by the escape of Morok.

A few minutes before the missionary entered the room, Rose and Blanche arrived almost together at the term of their mournful search, one from the left, the other from the right-hand row of beds, separated by the partition which divided the hall into compartments. The sisters had not yet seen each other. Their steps tottered as they advanced, and they were forced, from time to time, to lean against the beds as they passed along. Their strength was rapidly failing them. Giddy with fear and pain, they appeared to act almost mechanically. Alas! the orphans had been seized

almost at the same moment with the terrible symptoms of cholera. In consequence of that species of physiological phenomenon, of which we have already spoken—a phenomenon by no means rare in twins, which had already been displayed on one or two occasions of their sickness—their organizations seemed liable to the same sensations, the same simultaneous accidents, like two flowers on one stem, which bloom and fade together. The sight of so much suffering, and so many deaths, had accelerated the development of this dreadful disease. Already, on their agitated and altered countenances, they bore the mortal tokens of the contagion, as they came forth, each on her own side, from the two subdivisions of the room in which they had vainly sought their governess. Until now separated by the partition, Rose and Blanche had not yet seen each other; but, when at length their eyes met, there ensued a heart-rendng scene.

CHAPTER LVII.

THE GUARDIAN ANGEL.

To the charming freshness of the sisters' faces had succeeded a livid pallor. Their large blue eyes, now hollow and sunk in, appeared of enormous dimensions. Their lips, once so rosy, were now suffused with a violet hue, and a similar color was gradually displacing the transparent carmine of their cheeks and fingers. It was as if all the roses in their charming countenances were fading and turning blue before the icy blast of death.

When the orphans met, tottering and hardly able to sustain themselves, a cry of mutual horror burst from their lips. Each of them exclaimed, at sight of the fearful change in her sister's features, "Are you also ill, sister?" And then, bursting into tears, they threw themselves into each other's arms, and looked anxiously at one another.

"Good heaven, Rose! how pale you are!"

"Like you, sister."

"And do you feel a cold shudder?"

"Yes, and my sight fails me."

"My bosom is all on fire."

"Sister, we are perhaps going to die."

"Let it only be together!"

"And our poor father?"

"And Dagobert?"

"Sister, our dream has come true!" cried Rose, almost deliriously, as she threw her arms round Blanche's neck. "Look! look! the Angel Gabriel is here to fetch us."

Indeed, at this moment, Gabriel entered the open space at the end of the room. "Heavens! what do I see?" cried the young priest. "The daughters of Marshal Simon!"

And, rushing forward, he received the sisters in his arms, for they were no longer able to stand. Already their drooping heads, their half-closed eyes, their painful and difficult breathing, announced the approach of death. Sister Martha was close at hand. She hastened to respond to the call of Gabriel. Aided by this pious woman, he was able to lift the orphans upon a bed reserved for the doctor in attendance. For fear that the sight of this mournful agony should make too deep an impression on the other patients, Sister Martha drew a large curtain, and the sisters were thus in some sort walled off from the rest of the room. Their hands had been so tightly clasped together, during a nervous paroxysm, that it was impossible to separate them. It was in this position that the first remedies were applied--remedies incapable of conquering the violence of the disease, but which at least mitigated for a few moments the excessive pains they suffered, and restored some faint glimmer of perception to their obscured and troubled senses. At this moment, Gabriel was leaning over the bed with a look of inexpressible grief. With breaking heart, and face bathed in tears, he thought of the strange destiny, which thus made him a witness of the death of these girls, his relations, whom but a few months before he had rescued from the horrors of the tempest. In spite of his firmness of soul, the missionary could not help shuddering as he reflected on the fate of the orphans, the death of Jacques Rennepont, and the fearful devices by which M. Hardy, retired to the cloistered solitude of St. Hérem, had become a member of the Society of Jesus almost in dying. The missionary said to himself, that already four members of the Rennepont family —his family—had been successively struck down by some dreadful fate; and he asked himself with alarm, how it was that the detestable interests of the Society of Loyola should be served by a providential fatality? The astonishment of the young missionary would have given place to the deepest horror, could he have known the part that Rodin and his accomplices had taken, both in the death of Jacques Rennepont, by exciting, through Morok, the evil propensities of

the artisan, and in the approaching end of Rose and Blanche, by converting, through the Princess de Saint-Dizier, the generous inspirations of the orphans into suicidal heroism.

Roused for a moment from the painful stupor in which they had been plunged, Rose and Blanche half-opened their large eyes, already dull and faded. Then, more and more bewildered, they both gazed fixedly at the angelic countenance of Gabriel.

"Sister," said Rose, in a faint voice, "do you see the arch angel—as in our dreams, in Germany?"

"Yes—three days ago—he appeared to us."

"He is come to fetch us."

"Alas! will our death save our poor mother from purgatory?"

"Angel! blessed angel! pray God for our mother—and for us!" Until now, stupefied with amazement and sorrow, almost suffocated with sobs, Gabriel had not been able to utter a word. But at these words of the orphans, he exclaimed: "Dear children, why doubt of your mother's salvation? Oh! never did a purer soul ascend to its Creator. Your mother? I know from my adopted father, that her virtues and courage were the admiration of all who knew her. Oh! believe me; God has blessed her."

"Do you hear, sister?" cried Rose, as a ray of celestial joy illumined for an instant the livid faces of the orphans. "God has blessed our mother."

"Yes, yes," resumed Gabriel; "banish these gloomy ideas. Take courage, poor children! You must not die. Think of your father."

"Our father?" said Blanche, shuddering; and she continued, with a mixture of reason and wild excitement, which would have touched the soul of the most indifferent: "Alas! he will not find us on his return. Forgive us, father! we did not think to do any harm. We wished, like you, to do something generous—to help our governess."

"And we did not think to die so quickly, and so soon. Yesterday, we were gay and happy."

"Oh, good angel! you will appear to our father, even as you have appeared to us. You will tell him that, in dying—the last thought of his children—was of him."

"We came here without Dagobert's knowing it—do not let our father scold him."

"Blessed angel!" resumed the other sister, in a still more feeble voice; "appear to Dagobert, also. Tell him,

that we ask his forgiveness, for the grief our death will occasion him."

"And let our old friend caress our poor Spoil-sport for us—our faithful guardian," added Blanche, trying to smile.

"And then," resumed Rose, in a voice that was growing still fainter, "promise to appear to two other persons, that have been so kind to us—good Mother Bunch—and the beautiful Lady Adrienne."

"We forget none whom we have loved," said Blanche, with a last effort. "Now, God grant we may go to our mother, never to leave her more!"

"You promised it, good angel—you know you did—in the dream. You said to us: 'Poor children—come from so far—you will have traversed the earth—to rest on the maternal bosom!'"

"Oh! it is dreadful—dreadful! So young—and no hope!" murmured Gabriel, as he buried his face in his hands. "Almighty Father! Thy views are impenetrable. Alas! yet why should these children die this cruel death?"

Rose heaved a deep sigh and said in an expiring tone: "Let us be buried together!—united in life, in death not divided——"

And the two turned their dying looks upon Gabriel, and stretched out towards him their supplicating hands.

"Oh, blessed martyrs to a generous devotion!" cried the missionary, raising to heaven his eyes streaming with tears. "Angelic souls! treasures of innocence and truth! ascend, ascend to heaven—since God calls you to him, and the earth is not worthy to possess you!"

"Sister! father!" were the last words that the orphans pronounced with their dying voices.

And then the twins, by a last instinctive impulse, endeavored to clasp each other, and their eyes half-opened to exchange yet another glance. They shuddered twice or thrice, their limbs stiffened, a deep sigh struggled from their violet-colored lips. Rose and Blanche were both dead! Gabriel and Sister Martha, after closing the eyes of the orphans, knelt down to pray by the side of that funereal couch. Suddenly a great tumult was heard in the room. Rapid footsteps, mingled with imprecations, sounded close at hand, the curtain was drawn aside from this mournful scene, and Dagobert entered precipitately, pale, haggard, his dress in disorder. At sight of Gabriel and the Sister of Charity kneeling beside the corpses of his children, the soldier uttered a terrible roar, and tried to advance—but in

vain—for, before Gabriel could reach him, Dagobert fell flat on the ground, and his gray head struck violently on the floor.

* * * * * * *

It is night—a dark and stormy night. One o'clock in the morning has just sounded from the church of Montmartre. It is to the cemetery of Montmartre that is carried the coffin which, according to the last wishes of Rose and Blanche, contains them both. Through the thick shadow, which rests upon that field of death, may be seen moving a pale light. It is the gravedigger. He advances with caution; a dark lantern is in his hand. A man wrapped in a cloak accompanies him. He holds down his head and weeps. It is Samuel. The old Jew—the keeper of the house in the Rue Saint-François. On the night of the funeral of Jacques Rennepont, the first who died of the seven heirs, and who was buried in another cemetery, Samuel had a similar mysterious interview with the gravedigger, to obtain a favor at the price of gold. A strange and awful favor! After passing down several paths, bordered with cypress trees, by the side of many tombs, the Jew and the gravedigger arrived at a little glade, situated near the western wall of the cemetery. The night was so dark, that scarcely anything could be seen. After moving his lantern up and down, and all about, the gravedigger showed Samuel, at the foot of a tall yew-tree, with long black branches, a little mound of newly-raised earth, and said: "It is here."

"You are sure of it?"

"Yes, yes—two bodies in one coffin! it is not such a common thing."

"Alas! two in the same coffin!" said the Jew, with a deep sigh.

"Now that you know the place, what do you want more?" asked the gravedigger.

Samuel did not answer. He fell on his knees, and piously kissed the little mound. Then rising, with his cheeks bathed in tears, he approached the gravedigger, and spoke to him for some moments in a whisper—though they were alone, and in the centre of that deserted place. Then began between those two men a mysterious dialogue, which the night enveloped in shade and silence. The gravedigger, alarmed at what Samuel asked him, at first refused his request.

But the Jew, employing persuasions, entreaties, tears, and

at last the seduction of the jingling gold, succeeded in conquering the scruples of the gravedigger. Though the latter trembled at the thought of what he promised, he said to Samuel in an agitated tone: "To-morrow night, then, at two o'clock."

"I shall be behind the wall," answered Samuel, pointing out the place with the aid of a lantern. I will throw three stones into the cemetery, for a signal."

"Yes, three stones—as a signal," replied the gravedigger shuddering, and wiping the cold sweat from his forehead.

With considerable remains of vigor, notwithstanding his great age, Samuel availed himself of the broken surface of the low wall, and climbing over it, soon disappeared. The gravedigger returned home with hasty strides. From time to time, he looked fearfully behind him, as though he had been pursued by some fatal vision.

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On the evening after the funeral of Rose and Blanche, Rodin wrote two letters. The first, addressed to his mysterious correspondent at Rome, alluded to the deaths of Jacques Rennepont, and Rose and Blanche Simon, as well as to the cession of M. Hardy's property, and the donation of Gabriel—events which reduced the claimants of the inheritance to two—Mdlle. de Cardoville and Djalma. This first note written by Rodin for Rome, contained only the following words: "five from seven leaves two. Announce this result to the Cardinal-Prince. Let him go on. I advance—advance—advance!" The second note, in a feigned hand, was addressed to Marshal Simon, to be delivered by a sure messenger, contained these few lines: "If there is yet time, make haste to return. Your daughters are both dead. You shall learn who killed them."

CHAPTER LVIII.

RUIN.

It is the day after the death of Marshal Simon's daughters. Mdlle. de Cardoville is yet ignorant of the sad end of her young relatives. Her countenance is radiant with happiness, and never has she looked more beautiful; her eye has never been more brilliant, her complexion more dazzlingly white, her lip of a richer coral. According to her somewhat eccen-

tric custom of dressing herself in her own house in a picturesque style, Adrienne wears to-day, though it is about three o'clock in the afternoon, a pale green watered-silk dress, with a very full skirt, the sleeves and bodice slashed with rose-colored ribbon, and adorned with white bugle-beads of exquisite workmanship; while a slender network, also of white bugle-beads, concealing the thick plait of Adrienne's back-hair, forms an oriental head-dress of charming originality, and contrasts agreeably with the long curls which fall in front almost to the swell of the bosom. To the expression of indescribable happiness which marks the features of Mdlle. de Cardoville, is added a certain resolute, cutting, satirical air, which is not habitual to her. Her charming head, and graceful, swan-like neck, are raised in an attitude of defiance; her small, rose-colored nostrils seem to dilate with ill-repressed ardor, and she waits with haughty impatience for the moment of an aggressive and ironical interview. Not far from Adrienne is Mother Bunch. She has resumed in the house the place which she at first occupied. The young sempstress is in mourning for her sister, but her countenance is expressive of a mild, calm sorrow. She looks at Mdlle. de Cardoville with surprise; for never, till now, has she seen the features of the fair patrician impressed with such a character of ironical audacity. Mdlle. de Cardoville was exempt from the slightest coquetry, in the narrow and ordinary sense of the word. Yet she now cast an inquiring look at the glass before which she was standing, and, having restored the elastic smoothness to one of her long, golden curls, by rolling it for a moment round her ivory finger, she carefully effaced with her hands some almost imperceptible folds, which had formed themselves in the thick material of her elegant corsage. This movement, and that of turning her back to the glass, to see if her dress sat perfectly on all points, revealed, in serpentine undulations, all the charms and graces of her light and elegant figure; for, in spite of the rich fulness of her shoulders, white and firm as sculptured alabaster, Adrienne belonged to that class of privileged persons, who are able at need to make a girdle out of a garter.

Having performed, with indescribable grace, these charming evolutions of feminine coquetry, Adrienne turned towards Mother Bunch, whose surprise was still on the increase, and said to her, smiling: "My dear Magdalen, do not laugh at my question—but what would you say to a picture, that should represent me as I am now?"

"Why, lady——"

"There you are again, with your lady-ing," said Adrienne, in a tone of gentle reproach.

"Well, then, Adrienne," resumed Mother Bunch, "I think it would be a charming picture, for you are dressed, as usual with perfect taste."

"But am I not better dressed than on other days, my dear poetess? I began by telling you that I do not ask the question for my own sake," said Adrienne, gayly.

"Well, I suppose so," replied Mother Bunch, with a faint smile. "It is certainly impossible to imagine anything that would suit you better. The light green and the pale rose-color, with the soft lustre of the white ornaments, harmonize so well with your golden hair, that I cannot conceive, I tell you, a more graceful picture."

The speaker felt what she said, and she was happy to be able to express it, for we know the intense admiration of that poetic soul for all that was beautiful.

"Well!" went on Adrienne, gayly, "I am glad, my dear, that you find me better dressed than usual."

"Only," said the hunchback, hesitating.

"Only?" repeated Adrienne, looking at her with an air of interrogation.

"Why, only," continued the other, "if I have never seen you look more pretty, I have also never observed in your features the resolute and ironical expression which they had just now. It was like an air of impatient defiance."

"And so it was, my dear little Magdalen," said Adrienne, throwing her arms round the girl's neck with joyous tenderness. "I must kiss you, for having guessed it. You see, I expect a visit from my dear aunt."

"The Princess de Saint-Dizier?" cried Mother Bunch, in alarm. "That wicked lady, who did you so much evil?"

"The very same. She has asked for an interview, and I shall be delighted to receive her."

"Delighted?"

"Yes—a somewhat ironical and malicious delight, it is true," answered Adrienne, still more gayly. "You shall judge for yourself. She regrets her gallantries, her beauty, her youth—even her size afflicts the holy woman!—and she will see me young, fair, beloved—and above all thin—yes, thin," added Mdlle. de Cardoville, laughing merrily. "And you may imagine, my dear, how much envy and despair, the sight of a young, thin woman excites in a stout one of a certain age!"

"My friend," said Mother Bunch, gravely, "you speak in jest. And yet, I know not why, the coming of this princess alarms me."

"Dear, gentle soul, be satisfied!" answered Adrienne, affectionately. "I do not fear this woman—I no longer have any fear of her—and, to prove it to her confusion, I will treat her—a monster of hypocrisy and wickedness, who comes here, no doubt, on some abominable design—I will treat her as an inoffensive, ridiculous fat woman!" And Adrienne again laughed.

A servant here entered the room, and interrupted the mirth of Adrienne, by saying: "The Princess de Saint-Dizier wishes to know if you can receive her?"

"Certainly," said Mdlle. de Cardoville; and the servant retired. Mother Bunch was about to rise and quit the room; but Adrienne held her back, and said to her, taking her hand with an air of serious tenderness: "Stay, my dear friend, I entreat you."

"Do you wish it?"

"Yes; I wish—still in revenge, you know," said Adrienne, with a smile, "to prove to her highness of Saint-Dizier, that I have an affectionate friend—that I have, in fact, every happiness."

"But, Adrienne," replied the other, timidly, "consider——"

"Silence! here is the princess. Remain! I ask it as a favor. The instinct of your heart will discover any snare she may have laid. Did not your affection warn me of the plots of Rodin?"

Mother Bunch could not refuse such a request. She remained, but was about to draw back from the fireplace. Adrienne, however, took her by the hand, and made her resume her seat in the arm-chair, saying: "My dear Magdalen, keep your place. You owe nothing to the lady. With me it is different; she comes to my house."

Hardly had Adrienne uttered these words, than the princess entered with head erect, and haughty air (we have said, she could carry herself most loftily), and advanced with a firm step. The strongest minds have their side of puerile weakness; a savage envy, excited by the elegance, wit, and beauty of Adrienne, bore a large part in the hatred of the princess for her niece; and though it was idle to think of eclipsing Adrienne, and the Princess de Saint-Dizier did not seriously mean to attempt it, she could not forbear, in preparing for the interview she had demanded, taking more pains even than usual in the arrangement of her dress.

Beneath her robe of shot silk, she was laced in and tightened to excess—a pressure which considerably increased the color in her cheeks. The throng of jealous and hateful sentiments, which inspired her with regard to Adrienne, had so troubled the clearness of her ordinarily calm judgment, that, instead of the plain and quiet style, in which, as a woman of tact and taste, she was generally attired, she now committed the folly of wearing a dress of changing hues, and a crimson hat, adorned with a magnificent bird of paradise. Hate, envy, the pride of triumph—for she thought of the skilful perfidy with which she had sent to almost certain death the daughters of Marshal Simon—and the execrable hope of succeeding in new plots, were all expressed in the countenance of the Princess de Saint-Dizier, as she entered her niece's apartment.

Without advancing to meet her aunt, Adrienne rose politely from the sofa on which she was seated, made a half-curtsey, full of grace and dignity, and immediately resumed her former posture. Then, pointing to an arm-chair near the fireplace, at one corner of which sat Mother Bunch, and she herself at the other, she said: "Pray sit down, your highness." The princess turned very red, remained standing, and cast a disdainful glance of insolent surprise at the sempstress, who, in compliance with Adrienne's wish, only bowed slightly at the entrance of the Princess de Saint-Dizier, without offering to give up her place. In acting thus, the young sempstress followed the dictates of her conscience, which told her that the real superiority did not belong to this base, hypocritical, and wicked princess, but rather to such a person as herself, the admirable and devoted friend.

"Let me beg your highness to sit down," resumed Adrienne, in a mild tone, as she pointed to the vacant chair.

"The interview I have demanded, niece," said the princess, "must be a private one."

"I have no secrets, madame, from my best friend; you may speak in the presence of this young lady."

"I have long known," replied Madame de Saint-Dizier, with bitter irony, "that in all things you care little for secrecy, and that you are easy in the choice of what you call your friends. But you will permit me to act differently from you. If you have no secrets, madame, I have—and I do not choose to confide them to the first comer."

So saying, the pious lady glanced contemptuously at the

sempstress. The latter, hurt at the insolent tone of the princess, answered mildly and simply:

I do not see what can be the great difference between the first and the last comer to Mdlle. de Cardoville's."

"What! can it speak!" cried the princess, insolently.

"It can at least answer, madame," replied Mother Bunch, in her calm voice.

"I wish to see you alone, niece—is that clear?" said the princess, impatiently, to her niece.

"I beg your pardon, but I do not quite understand your highness," said Adrienne, with an air of surprise. "This young lady, who honors me with her friendship, is willing to be present at this interview, which you have asked for—I say she has consented to be present, for it needs, I confess, the kindest condescension in her to resign herself, from affection for me, to hear all the graceful, obliging, and charming things which you have no doubt come hither to communicate."

"Madame——" began the princess, angrily.

"Permit me to interrupt your highness," returned Adrienne, in a tone of perfect amenity, as if she were addressing the most flattering compliments to her visitor. "To put you quite at your ease with the lady here, I will begin by informing you that she is quite aware of all the holy perfidies, pious wrongs, and devout infamies, of which you nearly made me the victim. She knows that you are a mother of the Church, such as one sees but few of in these days. May I hope, therefore, that your highness will dispense with this delicate and interesting reserve?"

"Really," said the princess, with a sort of incensed amazement, "I scarcely know if I wake or sleep."

"Dear me!" said Adrienne, in apparent alarm; "this doubt as to the state of your faculties is very shocking, madame. I see that the blood flies to your head, for your face sufficiently shows it; you seem oppressed, confined, uncomfortable—perhaps (we women may say so between ourselves), perhaps you are laced a little too tightly, madame?"

These words, pronounced by Adrienne with an air of warm interest and perfect simplicity, almost choked the princess with rage. She became crimson, seated herself abruptly, and exclaimed: "Be it so, madame! I prefer this reception to any other. It puts me at my ease, as you say."

"Does it indeed, madame?" said Adrienne, with a smile. "You may now at least speak frankly all that you feel,

which must for you have the charm of novelty! Confess that you are obliged to me for enabling you, even for a moment, to lay aside that mask of piety, amiability, and goodness, which must be so troublesome to you."

As she listened to the sarcasms of Adrienne (an innocent and excusable revenge, if we consider all the wrongs she had suffered), Mother Bunch felt her heart sink within her; for she dreaded the malignity of the princess, who replied, with the utmost calmness: "A thousand thanks, madame, for your excellent intentions and sentiments. I appreciate them as I ought, and I hope in a short time to prove it to you."

"Well, madame," said Adrienne, playfully, "let us have it all at once. I am full of impatient curiosity."

"And yet," said the princess, feigning in her turn a bitter and ironical delight, "you are far from having the least notion of what I am about to announce to you."

"Indeed! I fear that your highness's candor and modesty deceive you," replied Adrienne, with the same mocking affability; "for there are very few things on your part that can surprise me, madame. You must be aware that from your highness, I am prepared for anything."

"Perhaps, madame," said the princess, laying great stress on her words, "if, for instance, I were to tell you that within twenty-four hours—suppose between this and to-morrow—you will be reduced to poverty——"

This was so unexpected, that Mdlle. de Cardoville started in spite of herself, and Mother Bunch shuddered.

"Ah, madame!" said the princess, with triumphant joy and cruel mildness, as she watched the growing surprise of her niece, "confess that I have astonished you a little. You were right in giving to our interview the turn it has taken. I should have needed all sorts of circumlocution to say to you, 'Niece, to-morrow you will be as poor as you are rich to-day.' But now I can tell you the fact quite plainly and simply."

Recovering from her first amazement, Adrienne replied, with a calm smile, which checked the joy of the princess: "Well, I confess frankly, madame, that you have surprised me; I expected from you one of those black pieces of malignity, one of those well-laid plots, in which you are known to excel, and I did not think you would make all this fuss about such a trifle."

"To be ruined—completely ruined," cried the princess, "and that by to-morrow—you that have been so prodigal,

will see your house, furniture, horses, jewels, even the ridiculous dresses of which you are so vain, all taken from you —do you call that a trifle? You, that spend with indifference thousands of louis, will be reduced to a pension inferior to the wages you give your foot-boy—do you call that a trifle?"

To her aunt's cruel disappointment, Adrienne, who appeared quite to have recovered her serenity, was about to answer accordingly, when the door suddenly opened, and, without being announced, Prince Djalma entered the room. A proud and tender expression of delight beamed from the radiant brow of Adrienne at sight of the prince, and it is impossible to describe the look of triumphant happiness and high disdain that she cast upon the Princess de Saint-Dizier. Djalma himself had never looked more handsome, and never had more intense happiness been impressed on a human countenance. The Hindoo wore a long robe of white Cashmere, adorned with inumerable stripes of gold and purple; his turban was of the same color and material; a magnificent figured shawl was twisted about his waist. On seeing the Indian, whom she had not hoped to meet at Mdlle. de Cardoville's, the Princess de Saint-Dizier could not at first conceal her extreme surprise. It was between these four, then, that the following scene took place.

CHAPTER LIX.

MEMORIES.

Djalma, having never before met the Princess de Saint-Dizer at Adrienne's, at first appeared rather astonished at her presence. The princess, keeping silence for a moment, contemplated with implacable hatred and envy those two beings, both so fair and young, so loving and happy. Suddenly she started, as if she had just remembered something of great importance, and for some seconds she remained absorbed in thought.

Adrienne and Djalma availed themselves of this interval to gaze fondly on each other, with a sort of ardent idolatry, which filled their eyes with sweet tears. Then, at a movement of the Princess de Saint-Dizier, who seemed to rouse herself from her momentary trance, Mdlle. de Cardoville said to the young prince, with a smile: "My dear cousin, I have to repair an omission (voluntary, I confess, and for

good reasons), in never having before mentioned to you one of my relations, whom I have now the honor to present to you. The Princess de Saint-Dizier!"

Djalma bowed; but Mdlle. de Cardoville resumed, just as her aunt was about to make some reply: "Her Highness of Saint-Dizier came very kindly to inform me of an event which is a most fortunate one for me, and of which I will speak to you hereafter, cousin—unless this amiable lady should wish to deprive me of the pleasure of making such a communication."

The unexpected arrival of the prince, and the recollections which had suddenly occurred to the princess, had no doubt greatly modified her first plans: for, instead of continuing the conversation with regard to Adrienne's threatened loss of fortune, the princess answered, with a bland smile, that covered an odious meaning: "I should be sorry, prince, to deprive my dear and amiable niece of the pleasure of announcing to you the happy news to which she alludes, and which, as a near relative, I lost no time in communicating to her. I have here some notes on this subject," added the princess, delivering a paper to Adrienne, "which I hope will prove, to her entire satisfaction, the reality of what I have announced to her."

"A thousand thanks, my dear aunt," said Adrienne, receiving the paper with perfect indifference; "these precautions and proofs are quite superfluous. You know that I always believe you on your word, when it concerns your good feeling towards myself."

Notwithstanding his ignorance of the refined perfidy and cruel politeness of civilized life, Djalma, endowed with a tact and fineness of perception common to most natures of extreme susceptibility, felt some degree of mental discomfort as he listened to this exchange of false compliments. He could not guess their full meaning, but they sounded hollow to his ear; and moreover, whether from instinct or presentiment, he had conceived a vague dislike for the Princess de Saint-Dizier. That pious lady, full of the great affair in hand, was a prey to the most violent agitation, which betrayed itself in the growing color of her cheeks, her bitter smile, and the malicious brightness of her glance. As he gazed on this woman, Djalma was unable to conquer his rising antipathy, and he remained silent and attentive, whilst his handsome countenance lost something of its former serenity. Mother Bunch also felt the influence of a painful impression. She glanced in terror at the princess, and then im-

ploringly at Adrienne, as though she entreated the latter to put an end to an interview of which the young sempstress foresaw the fatal consequences. But, unfortunately, the Princess de Saint-Dizier was too much interested in prolonging this conversation: and Mdlle. de Cardoville, gathering new courage and confidence from the presence of the man she adored, took delight in vexing the princess with the exhibition of their happy loves.

After a short silence, the Princess de Saint-Dizier observed, in a soft and insinuating tone: "Really, prince, you cannot think how pleased I was to learn by public report (for people talk of nothing else, and with good reason) of your chivalrous attachment to my dear niece; for, without knowing it, you will extricate me from a difficult position."

Djalma made no answer, but he looked at Mdlle. de Cardoville with a surprised and almost sorrowful air, as if to ask what her aunt meant to insinuate.

The latter, not perceiving this mute interrogation, resumed as follows "I will express myself more clearly, prince. You can understand that, being the nearest relative of this dear, obstinate girl, I am more or less responsible for her conduct in the eyes of the world; and you, prince, seem just to have arrived on purpose, from the end of the earth, to take charge of a destiny which had caused me considerable apprehension. It is charming, it is excellent; and I know not which most to admire, your courage or your good fortune." The princess threw a glance of diabolical malice at Adrienne, and awaited her answer with an air of defiance.

"Listen to our good aunt, my dear cousin," said the young lady, smiling calmly. "Since our affectionate kinswoman sees you and me united and happy, her heart is swelling with such a flood of joy, that it must run over, and the effects will be delightful. Only have a little patience, and you will behold them in their full beauty. I do not know," added Adrienne, in the most natural tone, "why, in thinking of these outpourings of our dear aunt's affection, I should remember what you told me, cousin, of a certain viper in your country which sometimes, in a powerless bite, breaks its fangs, and, absorbing its own venom, becomes the victim of the poison it distills. Come, my dear aunt, you that had so good and noble a heart, I am sure you must feel interested in the fate of those poor vipers."

The princess darted an implacable look at her niece, and replied, in an agitated voice, "I do not see the object of this selection of natural history. Do you, prince?"

Djalma made no answer; leaning with his arm on the mantelpiece, he threw dark and piercing glances upon the princess. His involuntary hatred of this woman filled his heart.

"Ah, my dear aunt!" resumed Adrienne, in a tone of self-reproach; "have I presumed too much on the goodness of your heart? Have you not even sympathy for vipers? For whom, then, have you any? After all, I can very well understand it," added Adrienne, as if to herself; "vipers are so thin. But, to lay aside these follies," she continued, gayly, as she saw the ill-repressed rage of the pious woman, "tell us at once, my dear aunt, all the tender things which the sight of our happiness inspires."

"I hope to do so, my amiable niece. First, I must congratulate this dear prince, on having come so far to take charge, in all confidence, and with his eyes shut, of you, my poor child, whom we were obliged to confine as mad, in order to give a decent color to your excesses. You remember the handsome lad, that we found in your apartment. You cannot be so faithless, as already to have forgotten his name? He was a fine youth, and a poet—one Agricola Baudoin—and was discovered in a secret place, attached to your bed-chamber. All Paris was amused with the scandal—for you are not about to marry an unknown person, dear prince; her name has been in every mouth."

At these unexpected and dreadful words, Adrienne, Djalma, and Mother Bunch, though under the influence of different kinds of resentment, remained for a moment mute with surprise; and the princess, judging it no longer necessary to repress her infernal joy and triumphant hatred, exclaimed, as she rose from her seat, with flushed cheek, and flashing eyes, "Yes, I defy you to contradict me. Were we not forced to confine you, on the plea of madness? And did we not find a workman (your lover) concealed in your bedroom?"

On this horrible accusation, Djalma's golden complexion, transparent as amber, became suddenly the color of lead; his eyes, fixed and staring, showed the white round the pupil—his upper lip, red as blood, was curled in a kind of wild convulsion, which exposed to view the firmly-set teeth—and his whole countenance became so frightfully threatening and ferocious, that Mother Bunch shuddered with terror. Carried away by the ardor of his blood, the young Oriental felt a sort of dizzy, unreflecting, involuntary rage—a fiery commotion, like that which makes the blood leap to the brave man's eyes and brain, when he feels a blow upon his

face. If, during that moment, rapid as the passage of the lightning through the cloud, action could have taken the place of thought, the princess and Adrienne, Mother Bunch and himself, would all have been annihilated by an explosion as sudden and fatal as that of the bursting of a mine. He would have killed the princess, because she accused Adrienne of infamous deception—he would have killed Adrienne, because she could even be suspected of such infamy—and Mother Bunch, for being a witness of the accusation—and himself, in order not to survive such horrid treachery. But, oh wonder! his furious and bloodshot gaze met the calm look of Adrienne—a look so full of dignity and serene confidence—and the expression of ferocious rage passed away like a flash or lightning.

Much more: to the great surprise of the princess and the young workgirl, as the glances which Djalma cast upon Adrienne went (as it were) deeper into that pure soul, not only did the Indian grow calm, but, by a kind of transfiguration, his countenance seemed to borrow her serene expression, and reflect, as in a mirror, the noble serenity impressed on the young lady's features. Let us explain physically this moral revolution, as consoling to the terrified workgirl, as provoking to the princess. Hardly had the princess distilled the atrocious calumny from her venomous lips, than Djalma, then standing before the fireplace, had, in the first paroxysm of his fury, advanced a step towards her; but, wishing as it were to moderate his rage, he held by the marble chimney-piece, which he grasped with iron strength. A convulsive trembling shook his whole body, and his features, altered and contracted, became almost frightful. Adrienne, on her part, when she heard the accusation, yielding to a first impulse of just indignation, even as Djalma had yielded to one of blind fury, rose abruptly, with offended pride flashing from her eyes; but, almost immediately appeased by the consciousness of her own purity, her charming face resumed its expression of adorable serenity. It was then that her eyes met Djalma's. For a second, the young lady was even more afflicted than terrified at the threatening and formidable expression of the young Indian's countenance. "Can stupid indignity exasperate him to this degree?" said Adrienne to herself. Does he suspect *me*, then?"

But to this reflection, as rapid as it was painful, succeeded the most lively joy, when the eyes of Adrienne rested for a short time on those of the Indian, and she saw his agitated countenance grow calm as if by magic, and become radiant

and beautiful as before. Thus was the abominable plot of the Princess de Saint-Dizier utterly confounded by the sincere and confiding expression of Adrienne's face. That was not all. At the moment, when, as a spectator of this mute and expressive scene (which proved so well the wondrous sympathy of those two beings, who, without speaking a word, had understood and satisfied each other), the princess was choking with rage and vexation—Adrienne, with a charming smile and gesture, extended her fair hand to Djalma, who, kneeling, imprinted on it a kiss of fire, which sent a light blush to the forehead of the young lady.

Then the Hindoo, placing himself on the ermine carpet at the feet of Mdlle. de Cardoville, in an attitude full of grace and respect, rested his chin on the palm of one of his hands, and gazed on her silently, in a sort of mute adoration—while Adrienne, bending over him with a happy smile "looked at the babies in his eyes," as the song says, with as much amorous complacency, as if the hateful princess had not been present. But soon, as if something were wanting to complete her happiness, Adrienne beckoned to Mother Bunch, and made her sit down by her side. Then, with her hand clasped in that of this excellent friend, Mdlle. de Cardoville smiled on Djalma, stretched adoringly at her feet, and cast on the dismayed princess a look of such calm and firm serenity, so nobly expressive of the invincible quiet of her happiness, and her lofty disdain of all calumnious attacks, that the Princess de Saint-Dizier, confused and stupefied, murmured some hardly intelligible words, in a voice trembling with passion, and, completely losing her presence of mind, rushed towards the door. But, at this moment, the hunchback, who feared some ambush, some perfidious plot in the background, resolved, after exchanging a glance with Adrienne, to accompany the princess to her carriage.

The angry disappointment of the Princess de Saint-Dizier, when she saw herself thus followed and watched, appeared so comical to Mdlle. de Cardoville that she could not help laughing aloud; and it was to the sound of contemptuous hilarity that the hypocritical princess, with rage and despair in her heart, quitted the house to which she had hoped to bring trouble and misery. Adrienne and Djalma were left alone. Before relating the scene which took place between them, a few retrospective words are indispensable. It will easily be imagined, that since Mdlle. de Cardoville and the Oriental had been brought into such close contact, after so many disappointments, their days had passed away

like a dream of happiness. Adrienne had especially taken pains to bring to light, one by one, all the generous qualities of Djalma, of which she had read so much in her books of travels. The young lady had imposed on herself this tender and patient study of Djalma's character, not only to justify to her own mind the intensity of her love, but because this period of trial, to which she had assigned a term enabled her to temper and divert the violence of Djalma's passion—a task the more meritorious, as she herself was of the same ardent temperament. For, in those two lovers, the finest qualities of sense and soul seemed exactly to balance each other, and heaven had bestowed on them the rarest beauty of form, and the most adorable excellence of heart, as if to legitimatize the irresistible attraction which drew and bound them together. What, then, was to be the term of this painful trial, which Adrienne had imposed on Djalma and on herself? This is what Mdlle. de Cardoville intended to tell the prince, in the interview she had with him, after the abrupt departure of the Princess de Saint-Dizier.

CHAPTER LX.

THE ORDEAL.

Adrienne de Cardoville and Djalma had remained alone. Such was the noble confidence which had succeeded in the Hindoo's mind to his first movement of unreflecting fury, caused by the infamous calumny, that, once alone with Adrienne, he did not even allude to that shameful accusation. On her side (touching and admirable sympathy of those two hearts!), the young lady was too proud, conscious of the purity of her love, to descend to any justification of herself. She would have considered it an insult both to herself and him. Therefore, the lovers began their interview, as if the princess had never made any such remark. The same contempt was extended to the papers, which the princess had brought with her, to prove the imminent ruin to which Adrienne was exposed. The young lady had laid them down, without reading them, on a stand within her reach. She made a graceful sign to Djalma to seat himself by her side, and accordingly he quitted, not without regret, the place he had occupied at her feet.

"My love," said Adrienne, in a grave and tender voice, "you have often impatiently asked me, when would come

the term of the trial we have laid upon ourselves. That moment is at hand."

Djalma started, and could not restrain a cry of surprise and joy; but this almost trembling exclamation was so soft and sweet, that it seemed rather the expression of ineffable gratitude, than of exulting passion.

Adrienne continued: "Separated—surrounded by treachery and fraud—mutually deceived as to each other's sentiments—we yet loved on, and in that followed an irresistible attraction, stronger than every opposing influence. But since then, in these days of happy retirement from the world, we have learned to value and esteem each other more. Left to ourselves in perfect freedom, we have had the courage to resist every temptation, that hereafter we might be happy without remorse. During these days, in which our hearts have been laid open to each other, we have read them thoroughly. Yes, Djalma! I believe in you, and you in me—I find in you all that you find in me—every possible human security for our future happiness. But this love must yet be consecrated; and in the eyes of the world, in which we are called upon to live, marriage is the only consecration, and marriage enchains one's whole life."

Djalma looked at the young lady with surprise.

"Yes, one's whole life! and yet who can answer for the sentiments of a whole life?" resumed Adrienne. "A God, that could see into the future, could alone bind irrevocably certain hearts for their own happiness; but, alas! to human eyes the future is impenetrable. Therefore, to accept indissoluble ties, for any longer than one can answer for a present sentiment, is to commit an act of selfish and impious folly."

Djalma made no reply, but, with an almost respectful gesture, he urged the speaker to continue.

"And then," proceeded she, with a mixture of tenderness and pride, "from respect for your dignity and mine, I would never promise to keep a law made by man against woman, with contemptuous and brutal egotism—a law, which denies to woman soul, mind, and heart—a law, which none can accept, without being either a slave or perjured—a law, which takes from the girl her name, reduces the wife to a state of degrading inferiority, denies to the mother all rights over her own children, and enslaves one human creature to the will of another, who is in all respects her equal in the sight of God!—You know, my love," added the young lady, with passionate enthusiasm, "how much I honor you, whose

father was called the Father of the Generous. I do not then fear, noble and valiant heart, to see you use against me these tyrannical powers; but, throughout my life, I never uttered a falsehood, and our love is too sacred and celestial to be purchased by a double perjury. No, never will I swear to observe a law, that my dignity and my reason refuse to sanction. If, to-morrow, the freedom of divorce were established, and the rights of women recognized, I should be willing to observe usages, which would then be in accordance with my conscience, and with what is just, possible, and humane." Then, after a pause, Adrienne continued, with such deep and sweet emotion, that a tear of tenderness veiled her beauteous eyes: "Oh! if you knew, my love, what your love is to me: if you knew how dear and sacred I hold your happiness—you would excuse, you would understand, these generous superstitions of a loving and honest heart, which could only see a fatal omen in forms degraded by falsehood and perjury. What I wish, is, to attach you by love, to bind you in chains of happiness—and to leave you free, that I may owe your constancy only to your affection."

Djalma had listened to the young girl with passionate attention. Proud and generous himself, he admired this proud and generous character. After a moment's meditative silence, he answered, in his sweet, sonorous voice, in an almost solemn tone: "Like you, I hold in detestation, falsehood and perjury. Like you, I think that man degrades himself, by accepting the right of being a cowardly tyrant, even though resolved never to use the power. Like you, I could not bear the thought, that I owed all I most valued, not to your love alone, but to the eternal constraint of an indissoluble bond. Like you, I believe there is no dignity but in freedom. But you have said, that, for this great and holy love, you demand a religious consecration; and if you reject vows, that you cannot make without folly and perjury, are there then others, which your reason and your heart approve?—Who will pronounce the required blessing? To whom must these vows be spoken?"

"In a few days, my love, I believe I shall be able to tell you all. Every evening, after your departure, I have no other thought. I wish to find the means of uniting yourself and me—in the eyes of God, not of the law—without offending the habits and prejudices of a world, in which it may suit us hereafter to live. Yes, my friend! when you know whose are the noble hands, that are to join ours together—who is to bless and glorify God in our union—a sacred union,

that will leave us worthy and free—you will say, I am sure, that never purer hands could have been laid upon us. Forgive me, friend! all this is in earnest—yes, earnest as our love, earnest as our happiness. If my words seem to you strange, my thoughts unreasonable, tell it me, love! We will seek and find some better means, to reconcile that we owe to heaven, with what we owe to the world and to ourselves. It is said, that lovers are beside themselves," added the young lady, with a smile, "but I think that no creatures are more reasonable."

"When I hear you speak thus of our happiness," said Djalma, deeply moved, "with so much calm and earnest tenderness, I think I see a mother occupied with the future prospects of her darling child—trying to surround him with all that can make him strong, valiant, and generous—trying to remove far from him all that is ignoble and unworthy. You ask me to tell you if your thoughts seem strange to me, Adrienne. You forget, that what makes my faith in our love, is my feeling exactly as you do. What offends you, offends me also; what disgusts you, disgusts me. Just now, when you cited to me the laws of this country, which respect in a woman not even a mother's right—I thought with pride of our barbarous countries, where woman, though a slave, is made free when she becomes a mother. No, no; such laws are not made either for you or me. Is it not to prove your sacred respect for our love, to wish to raise it above the shameful servitude that would degrade it? You see, Adrienne, I have often heard say by the priests of my country, that there were beings inferior to the gods, but superior to every other creature. I did not believe those priests; but now I do." These last words were uttered, not in the tone of flattery, but with an accent of sincere conviction, and with that sort of passionate veneration and almost timid fervor, which mark the believer talking of his faith; but what is impossible to describe, is the ineffable harmony of these almost religious words, with the mild, deep tone of the young Oriental's voice—as well as the ardent expression of amorous melancholy, which gave an irresistible charm to his enchanting features.

Adrienne had listened to Djalma with an indescribable mixture of joy, gratitude, and pride. Laying her hand on her bosom, as if to keep down its violent pulsations, she resumed, as she looked at the prince with delight: "Behold him, ever the same!—just, good, great!—Oh, my heart! my heart! how proudly it beats. Blessed be God,

who created me for this adored lover! He must mean to astonish the world, by the prodigies of tenderness and charity, that such a love may produce. They do not yet know the sovereign might of free, happy, ardent love. Yes, Djalma! on the day when our hands are joined together, what hymns of gratitude will ascend to heaven!—Ah! they do not know the immense, the insatiable longing for joy and delight, which possesses two hearts like ours; they do not know what rays of happiness stream from the celestial halo of such a flame!—Oh, yes! I feel it. Many tears will be dried, many cold hearts warmed, at the divine fire of our love. And it will be by the benedictions of those we serve, that they will learn the intoxication of our rapture!"

To the dazzled eyes of Djalma, Adrienne appeared more and more an ideal being—partaking of the Divinity by her goodness, of the animal nature by passion—for, yielding to the intensity of excitement, Adrienne fixed upon Djalma looks that sparkled with love.

Then, almost beside himself, the Asiatic fell prostrate at the feet of the maiden, and exclaimed, in a supplicating voice: "Mercy! my courage fails me. Have pity on me! do not talk thus. Oh, that day! what years of my life would I not give to hasten it!"

"Silence! no blasphemy. Do not your years belong to me?"

"Adrienne! you love me!"

The young lady did not answer; but her half-veiled, burning glance, dealt the last blow to Djalma's reason. Seizing her hands in his own, he exclaimed, with a tremulous voice: "That day, in which we shall mount to heaven, in which we shall be gods in happiness—why postpone it any longer?"

"Because our love must be consecrated by the benediction of heaven."

"Are we not free?"

"Yes, yes, my love; we are free. Let us be worthy of our liberty!"

"Adrienne! mercy!"

"I ask you also to have mercy—to have mercy on the sacredness of our love. Do not profane it in its very flower. Believe my heart! believe my presentiments! to profane it would be to kill. Courage, my adored lover! a few days longer—and then happiness—without regret, and without remorse!"

"And, until then, hell! tortures without a name! You

do not, cannot know what I suffer when I leave your presence. Your image follows me, your breath burns me up; I cannot sleep, but call on you every night with sighs and tears—just as I called on you, when I thought you did not love me—and yet I know you love me, I know you are mine. But to see you every day more beautiful, more adored—and every day to quit you more impassioned—oh! you cannot tell——"

Djalma was unable to proceed. What he said of his devouring tortures, Adrienne had felt, perhaps even more intensely. Electrified by the passionate words of Djalma, so beautiful in his excitement, her courage failed, and she perceived that an irresistible languor was creeping over her. By a last chaste effort of the will, she rose abruptly, and hastening to the door, which communicated with Mother Bunch's chamber, she exclaimed: "My sister! help me!"

In another moment, Mdlle. de Cardoville, her face bathed in tears, clasped the young sempstress in her arms; while Djalma knelt respectfully on the threshold he did not dare to pass.

CHAPTER LXI.

AMBITION.

A FEW days after the interview of Djalma and Adrienne, just described, Rodin was alone in his bed-chamber, in the house in the Rue de Vaugirard, walking up and down the room where he had so valiantly undergone the moxas of Dr. Baleinier. With his hands thrust into the hind-pockets of his greatcoat, and his head bowed upon his breast, the Jesuit seemed to be reflecting profoundly, and his varying walk, now slow, now quick, betrayed the agitation of his mind.

"On the side of Rome," said Rodin to himself, "I am tranquil. All is going well. The abdication is as good as settled, and if I can pay them the price agreed, the Prince Cardinal can secure me a majority of nine voices in the conclave. Our General is with me; the doubts of Cardinal Malipieri are at an end, or have found no echo. Yet I am not quite easy, with regard to the reported correspondence between Father d'Aigrigny and Malipieri. I have not been able to intercept any of it. No matter; that soldier's business is settled. A little patience and he will be wiped out."

Here the pale lips were contracted by one of those frightful smiles, which gave to Rodin's countenance so diabolical an expression.

After a pause, he resumed: "The funeral of the free-thinker, the philanthropist, the workman's friend, took place yesterday at St. Hérem. Francis Hardy went off in a fit of ecstatic delirium. I had his donation, it is true; but this is more certain. Everything may be disputed in this world; the dead dispute nothing."

Rodin remained in thought for some moments; then he added, in a grave tone: "There remain this red-haired wench and her mulatto. This is the twenty-seventh of May; the first of June approaches, and these turtle-doves still seem invulnerable. The princess thought she had hit upon a good plan, and I should have thought so too. It was a good idea to mention the discovery of Agricola Baudoin in the madcap's room, for it made the Indian tiger roar with savage jealousy. Yes: but then the dove began to coo, and hold out her pretty beak, and the foolish tiger sheathed his claws, and rolled on the ground before her. It's a pity, for there was some sense in the scheme."

The walk of Rodin became more and more agitated. "Nothing is more extraordinary," continued he, "than the generative succession of ideas. In comparing this red-haired jade to a dove (*colombe*), I could not help thinking of that infamous old woman, Sainte-Colombe, whom that big rascal Jacques Dumoulin pays his court to, and whom the Abbé Corbinet will finish, I hope, by turning to good account. I have often remarked, that, as a poet may find an excellent rhyme by mere chance, so the germ of the best ideas is sometimes found in a word, or in some absurd resemblance like the present. That abominable hag, Sainte-Colombe, and the pretty Adrienne de Cardoville, go as well together, as a ring would suit a cat, or a necklace a fish. Well, there is nothing in it."

Hardly had Rodin pronounced these words, than he started suddenly, and his face shone with a fatal joy. Then it assumed an expression of meditative astonishment, as happens when chance reveals some unexpected discovery to the surprised and charmed inquirer after knowledge.

Soon, with raised head and sparkling eye, his hollow cheeks swelling with joy and pride, Rodin folded his arms in triumph on his breast, and exclaimed: "Oh! how admirable and marvellous are these mysterious evolutions of the mind; how incomprehensible is the chain of human thought,

which, starting from an absurd jingle of words, arrives at a splendid or luminous idea! Is it weakness? or is it strength? Strange—very strange! I compare the red-haired girl to a dove—a colombe. That makes me think of the hag, who traded in the bodies and souls of so many creatures. Vulgar proverbs occur to me, about a ring and a cat, a fish and a necklace—and suddenly, at the word NECKLACE, a new light dawns upon me. Yes: that one word NECKLACE shall be to me a golden key, to open the portals of my brain, so long foolishly closed."

And, after again walking hastily up and down, Rodin continued: "Yes, it is worth attempting. The more I reflect upon it, the more feasible it appears. Only how to get at that wretch, Saint-Colombe? Well, there is Jacques Dumoulin, and the other—where to find her? That is the stumbling-block. I must not shout before I am out of the wood."

Rodin began again to walk, biting his nails with an air of deep thought. For some moments, such was the tension of his mind, large drops of sweat stood on his yellow brow. He walked up and down, stopped, stamped with his foot, now raised his eyes as if in search of an inspiration, and now scratched his head violently with his left hand, whilst he continued to gnaw the nails of the right. Finally, from time to time, he uttered exclamations of rage, despondency, or hope, as by turns they took possession of his mind. If the cause of this monster's agitation had not been horrible, it would have been a curious and interesting spectacle to watch the labors of that powerful brain—to follow, as it were, on that shifting countenance, the progress and developmen of the project, on which he was now concentrating all the resources of his strong intellect. At length, the work appeared to be near completion, for Rodin resumed: "Yes, yes! it is bold, hazardous—but then it is prompt, and the consequences may be incalculable. Who can foresee the effects of the explosion of a mine?"

Then, yielding to a movement of enthusiasm, which was hardly natural to him, the Jesuit exclaimed, with rapture: "Oh, the passions! the passions! what a magical instrument do they form, if you do but touch the keys with a light, skilful, and vigorous hand! How beautiful too is the power of thought! Talk of the acorn that becomes an oak, the seed that grows up to the corn—the seed takes months, the acorn centuries, to unfold its splendors—but here is a little word in eight letters, necklace—and this

word, falling into my brain but a few minutes ago, has grown and grown till it has become larger than any oak. Yes, that word is the germ of an idea, that, like the oak, lifts itself up towards heaven, for the greater glory of the Lord—such as they call Him, and such as I would assert Him to be, should I attain—and I shall attain—for these miserable Renneponts will pass away like a shadow. And what matters it, after all, to the moral order I am reserved to guide, whether these people live or die? What do such lives weigh in the balance of the great destinies of the world? while this inheritance which I shall boldly fling into the scale, will lift me to a sphere, from which one commands many kings, many nations—let them say and make what noise they will. The idiots—the stupid idiots! or rather, the kind, blessed, adorable idiots! They think they have crushed us, when they say to us men of the church: "You take the spiritual, but we will keep the temporal!" —Oh, their conscience or their modesty inspires them well, when it bids them not meddle with spiritual things! They abandon the spiritual! they despise it, they will have nothing to do with it—oh, the venerable asses! they do not see, that, even as they go straight to the mill, it is by the spiritual that we go straight to the temporal. As if the mind did not govern the body! They leave us the spiritual —that is, command of the conscience, soul, heart, and judgment—the spiritual—that is, the distribution of heaven's rewards, and punishments, and pardons—without check, without control, in the secrecy of the confessional—and that dolt, the temporal, has nothing but brute matter for his portion, and yet rubs his paunch for joy. Only, from time to time, he perceives, too late, that, if he has the body, we have the soul, and that the soul governs the body, and so the body ends by coming with us also—to the great surprise of Master Temporal, who stands staring with his hands on his paunch, and says: "Dear me! is it possible?"

Then, with a laugh of savage contempt, Rodin began to walk with great strides, and thus continued: "Oh! let me reach it—let me but reach the place of Sixtus V.—and the world shall see (one day, when it awakes) what it is to have the spiritual power in hands like mine—in the hands of a priest who, for fifty years, has lived hardly, frugally, chastely, and who, were he pope, would continue to live hardly, frugally, chastely!"

Rodin became terrible, as he spoke thus. All the sanguinary, sacrilegious, execrable ambition of the worst popes

seemed written in fiery characters on the brow of this son of Ignatius. A morbid desire of rule seemed to stir up the Jesuit's impure blood; he was bathed in a burning sweat, and a kind of nauseous vapor spread itself round about him. Suddenly, the noise of a travelling-carriage, which entered the courtyard of the house, attracted his attention. Regretting his momentary excitement, he drew from his pocket his dirty white and red cotton handkerchief, and dipping it in a glass of water, he applied it to his cheeks and temples, while he approached the window, to look through the half-open blinds at the traveller who had just arrived. The projection of a portico, over the door at which the carriage had stopped, intercepted Rodin's view.

"No matter," said he, recovering his coolness: "I shall know presently who is there. I must write at once to Jacques Dumoulin, to come hither immediately. He served me well, with regard to that little slut in the Rue Clovis, who made my hair stand on end with her infernal Béranger. This time, Dumoulin may serve me again. I have him in my clutches, and he will obey me."

Rodin sat down to his desk and wrote. A few seconds later, some one knocked at the door, which was double-locked, quite contrary to the rules of the order. But, sure of his own influence and importance, Rodin, who had obtained from the general permission to be rid for a time of the inconvenient company of a socius, often took upon himself to break through a number of the rules. A servant entered and delivered a letter to Rodin. Before opening it the latter said to the man: "What carriage is that which just arrived?"

"It comes from Rome, father," answered the servant, bowing.

"From Rome!" said Rodin, hastily; and in spite of himself, a vague uneasiness was expressed in his countenance. But, still holding the letter in his hands, he added: "Who comes in the carriage?"

"A reverend father of our blessed Company."

Nothwithstanding his ardent curiosity, for he knew that a reverend father, travelling post, is always charged with some important mission, Rodin asked no more questions on the subject, but said, as he pointed to the paper in his hand: "Whence comes this letter?"

"From our house at St. Hérem, father."

Rodin looked more attentively at the writing, and recognized the hand of Father d'Aigrigny, who had been com-

missioned to attend M. Hardy in his last moments. The letter ran as follows:

"I send a despatch to inform your reverence of a fact which is, perhaps, more singular than important. After the funeral of M. Francis Hardy, the coffin, which contained his remains, had been provisionally deposited in a vault beneath our chapel, until it could be removed to the cemetery of the neighboring town. This morning, when our people went down into the vault, to make the necessary preparations for the removal of the body—the coffin had disappeared."

"That is strange, indeed," said Rodin with a start. Then he continued to read:

"All search has hitherto been vain, to discover the authors of the sacrilegious deed. The chapel being, as you know, at a distance from the house, they were able to effect an entry without disturbing us. We have found traces of a four-wheeled carriage on the damp ground in the neighborhood; but, at some little distance from the chapel, these marks are lost in the sand, and it has been impossible to follow them any farther."

"Who can have carried away this body?" said Rodin, with a thoughtful air. Who could have any interest in doing so?"

He continued to read:

"Luckily, the certificate of death is quite correct. I sent for a doctor from Etampes, to prove the disease, and no question can be raised on that point. The donation is therefore good and valid in every respect, but I think it best to inform your reverence of what has happened, that you may take measures accordingly, etc., etc."

After a moment's reflection, Rodin said to himself: "D'Aigrigny is right in his remark; it is more singular than important. Still, it makes one think. We must have an eye to this affair."

Turning towards the servant, who had brought him the letter, Rodin gave him the note he had just written to Ninny Moulin, and said to him: "Let this letter be taken instantly to its address, and let the bearer wait for an answer."

"Yes, father."

At the moment the servant left the room, a reverend father entered, and said to Rodin, "Father Caboccini of Rome has just arrived, with a mission from our general to your reverence."

At these words, Rodin's blood ran cold, but he maintained his immovable calmness, and said simply: "Where is Father Caboccini?"

"In the next room, father."

"Beg him to walk in, and leave us," said the other.

A second after, Father Caboccini of Rome entered the room and was left alone with Rodin.

CHAPTER LXII.

TO A SOCIUS, A SOCIUS AND A HALF.

The Reverend Father Caboccini, the Roman Jesuit who now came to visit Rodin, was a short man of about thirty years of age, plump, in good condition, and with an abdomen that swelled out his black cassock. The good little father was blind with one eye, but his remaining organ of vision sparkled with vivacity. His rosy countenance was gay, smiling, joyous, splendidly crowned with thick chestnut hair, which curled like a wax doll's. His address was cordial to familiarity, and his expansive and petulant manners harmonized well with his general appearance. In a second, Rodin had taken his measure of the Italian emissary; and as he knew the practice of his Company, and the ways of Rome, he felt by no means comfortable at sight of this jolly little father, with such affable manners. He would have less feared some tall, bony priest, with austere and sepulchral countenance, for he knew that the Company loves to deceive by the outward appearance of its agents; and, if Rodin guessed rightly, the cordial address of this personage would rather tend to show that he was charged with some fatal mission.

Suspicious, attentive, with eye and mind on the watch, like an old wolf, expecting an attack, Rodin advanced as usual, slowly and tortuously towards the little man, so as to have time to examine him thoroughly, and penetrate beneath his jovial outside. But the Roman left him no space for that purpose. In his impetuous affection he threw himself right on the neck of Rodin, pressed him in his arms with an effusion of tenderness, and kissed him over and over again upon both cheeks, so loudly and plentifully that the echo resounded through the apartment. In his life Rodin had never been so treated. More and more uneasy at the treachery which must needs lurk under such warm embraces, and irritated by his own evil presentiments, the French Jesuit did all he could to extricate himself from the Roman's exaggerated tokens of tenderness. But the latter kept his hold; his

arms, though short, were vigorous, and Rodin was kissed over and over again, till the little one-eyed man was quite out of breath. It is hardly necessary to state that these embraces were accompanied by the most friendly, affectionate, and fraternal exclamations—all in tolerably good French, but with a strong Italian accent, which we must beg the reader to supply for himself, after we have given a single specimen. It will perhaps be remembered that, fully aware of the danger he might possibly incur by his ambitious machinations, and knowing from history that the use of poison had often been considered at Rome as a state necessity, Rodin, on being suddenly attacked with the cholera, had exclaimed, with a furious glance at Cardinal Malipieri, "I am poisoned!"

The same apprehensions occurred involuntarily to the Jesuit's mind as he tried, by useless efforts, to escape from the embraces of the Italian emissary; and he could not help muttering to himself, "This one-eyed fellow is a great deal too fond. I hope there is no poison under his Judas-kisses." At last, little Father Caboccini, being quite out of breath, was obliged to relinquish his hold on Rodin's neck, who, readjusting his dirty collar, and his old cravat and waistcoat, somewhat in disorder in consequence of this hurricane of caresses, said in a gruff tone, "Your humble servant, father, but you need not kiss quite so hard."

Without making any answer to this reproach, the little father riveted his one eye upon Rodin with an expression of enthusiasm, and exclaimed, whilst he accompanied his words with petulant gestures, "At lazt I zee te zuperb light of our zacred Company, and can zalute him from my heart—vonse more, vonse more."

As the little father had already recovered his breath, and was about to rush once again into Rodin's arms, the latter stepped back hastily, and held out his arm to keep him off, saying, in allusion to the illogical metaphor employed by Father Caboccini, "First of all, father, one does not embrace a light—and then I am not a light—I am a humble and obscure laborer in the Lord's vineyard."

The Roman replied with enthusiasm (we shall henceforth translate his gibberish), "You are right, father, we cannot embrace a light, but we can prostrate ourselves before it, and admire its dazzling brightness."

So saying, Caboccini was about to suit the action to the word, and to prostrate himself before Rodin, had not the latter prevented this mode of adulation by seizing the

Roman by the arm and exclaiming, "This is mere idolatry, father. Pass over my qualities, and tell me what is the object of your journey."

"The object, my dear father, fills me with joy and happiness. I have endeavored to show you my affection by my caresses, for my heart is overflowing. I have hardly been able to restrain myself during my journey hither, for my heart rushed to meet you. The object transports, delights, enchants me——"

"But what enchants you?" cried Rodin, exasperated by these Italian exaggerations. "What is the object?"

"This rescript of our very reverend and excellent General will inform you, my dear father."

Caboccini drew from his pocket-book a folded paper, with three seals, which he kissed respectfully, and delivered to Rodin, who himself kissed it in his turn, and opened it with visible anxiety. While he read it, the countenance of the Jesuit remained impassible, but the pulsation of the arteries on his temples announced his internal agitation. Yet he put the letter coolly into his pocket, and looking at the Roman, said to him, "Be it as our excellent General has commanded!"

"Then, father," cried Caboccini, with a new effusion of tenderness and admiration, "I shall be the shadow of your light, and, in fact, your second self. I shall have the happiness of being always with you, day and night, and of acting as your socius, since, after having allowed you to be without one for some time, according to your wish, and for the interest of our blessed Company, our excellent General now thinks fit to send me from Rome, to fill that post about your person—an unexpected, an immense favor, which fills me with gratitude to our General, and with love to you, my dear, my excellent father!"

"It is well played," thought Rodin; "but I am not so soft, and 'tis only among the blind that your cyclops are kings!"

* * * * * *

The evening of the day in which this scene took place between the Jesuit and his new socius, Ninny Moulin, after receiving in presence of Caboccini the instructions of Rodin, went straight to Madame de la Sainte-Colombe's.

This woman had made her fortune, at the time of the allies taking Paris, by keeping one of those "pretty milliner's-shops," whose "pink bonnets" have run into a proverb not extinct in these days when bonnets are not known. Ninny

Moulin had no better well to draw inspiration from when, as now, he had to find out, as per Rodin's order, a girl of an age and appearance which, singularly enough, were closely resembling those of Mdlle. de Cardoville.

No doubt of Ninny Moulin's success in this mission, for the next morning Rodin, whose countenance wore a triumphant expression, put with his own hand a letter into the post.

This letter was addressed :

"To M. Agricola Baudoin,
"No. 2, Rue Brise-Miche,
"Paris."

CHAPTER LXIII.

FARINGHEA'S AFFECTION.

It will, perhaps, be remembered that Djalma, when he heard for the first time that he was beloved by Adrienne, had, in the fulness of his joy, spoken thus to Faringhea, whose treachery he had just discovered, "You leagued with my enemies, and I had done you no harm. You are wicked, because you are no doubt unhappy. I will strive to make you happy, so that you may be good. Would you have gold? —you shall have it. Would you have a friend?—though you are a slave, a king's son offers you his friendship."

Faringhea had refused the gold, and appeared to accept the friendship of the son of Kadja-sing. Endowed with remarkable intelligence, and extraordinary power of dissimulation the half-breed had easily persuaded the prince of the sincerity of his repentance, and obtained credit for his gratitude and attachment from so confiding and generous a character. Besides, what motives could Djalma have to suspect the slave, now become his friend? Certain of the love of Mdlle. de Cardoville, with whom he passed a portion of every day, her salutary influence would have guarded him against any dangerous counsels or calumnies of the half-caste, a faithful and secret instrument of Rodin, and attached by him to the Company. But Faringhea, whose tact was amazing, did not act so lightly; he never spoke to the prince of Mdlle. de Cardoville, and waited unobtrusively for the confidential communications into which Djalma was sometimes hurried by his excessive joy. A few days after the interview last described between Adrienne and Djalma, and

on the morrow of the day when Rodin, certain of the success of Ninny Moulin's mission to Sainte-Colombe, had himself put a letter in the post to the address of Agricola Baudoin, the half-caste, who for some time had appeared oppressed with a violent grief, seemed to get so much worse, that the prince, struck with the desponding air of the man, asked him kindly and repeatedly the cause of his sorrow. But Faringhea, while he gratefully thanked the prince for the interest he took in him, maintained the most absolute silence and reserve on the subject of his grief.

These preliminaries will enable the reader to understand the following scene, which took place about noon in the house in the Rue de Clichy occupied by the Hindoo. Contrary to his habit, Djalma had not passed that morning with Adrienne. He had been informed the evening before, by the young lady, that she must ask of him the sacrifice of this whole day, to take the necessary measures to make their marriage sacred and acceptable in the eyes of the world, and yet free from the restrictions which she and Djalma disapproved. As for the means to be employed by Mdlle. de Cardoville to attain this end, and the name of the pure and honorable person who was to consecrate their union, these were secrets which, not belonging exclusively to the young lady, could not yet be communicated to Djalma. To the Indian, so long accustomed to devote every instant to Adrienne, this day seemed interminable. By turns a prey to the most burning agitation, and to a kind of stupor, in which he plunged himself to escape from the thoughts that caused his tortures, Djalma lay stretched upon a divan, with his face buried in his hands, as if to shut out the view of a too enchanting vision. Suddenly, without knocking at the door, as usual, Faringhea entered the prince's apartment.

At the noise the half-caste made in entering, Djalma started, raised his head, and looked round him with surprise; but, on seeing the pale agitated countenance of the slave, he rose hastily, and advancing towards him, exclaimed: "What is the matter, Faringhea!"

After a moment's silence, and as if struggling with a painful feeling of hesitation, Faringhea threw himself at the feet of Djalma, and murmured in a weak, despairing, almost supplicating voice: "I am very miserable. Pity me, my good lord!"

The tone was so touching, the grief under which the half-breed suffered seemed to give to his features, generally fixed and hard as bronze, such a heart-rending expression,

that Djalma was deeply affected, and, bending to raise him from the ground, said to him, in a kindly voice: "Speak to me! Confidence appeases the torments of the heart. Trust me, friend—for my angel herself said to me, that happy love cannot bear to see tears about him."

"But unhappy love, miserable love, betrayed love—weeps tears of blood," replied Faringhea, with painful dejection.

"Of what love dost thou speak?" asked Djalma, in surprise.

"I speak of my love," answered the half-caste, with a gloomy air.

"Of *your* love?" said Djalma, more and more astonished; not that the half-caste, still young, and with a countenance of sombre beauty, appeared to him incapable of inspiring or feeling the tender passion, but that, until now, he had never imagined him capable of conceiving so deep a sorrow.

"My lord," resumed the half-caste, "you told me, that misfortune had made me wicked, and that happiness would make me good. In those words, I saw a presentiment, and a noble love entered my heart, at the moment when hatred and treachery departed from it. I, the half-savage, found a woman, beautiful and young, to respond to my passion. At least I thought so. But I had betrayed you, my lord, and there is no happiness for a traitor, even though he repent. In my turn, I have been shamefully betrayed."

Then, seeing the surprise of the prince, the half-caste added, as if overwhelmed with confusion: "Do not mock me, my lord! The most frightful tortures would not have wrung this confession from me; but you, the son of a king, deigned to call the poor slave your friend!"

"And your friend thanks you for the confidence," answered Djalma. "Far from mocking, he will console you. Mock you! do you think it possible?"

"Betrayed love merits contempt and insult," said Faringhea, bitterly. "Even cowards may point at one with scorn—for, in this country, the sight of the man deceived in what is dearest to his soul, the very life-blood of his life, only makes people shrug their shoulders and laugh."

"But are you certain of this treachery?" said Djalma, mildly. Then he added, with visible hesitation, that proved the goodness of his heart: "Listen to me, and forgive me for speaking of the past! It will only be another proof, that I cherish no evil memories, and that I fully believe in your repentance and affection. Remember, that I also once thought, that she, who is the angel of my life, did not love

me—and yet it was false. Who tells you, that you are not, like me, deceived by false appearances?"

"Alas, my lord! could I only believe so! But I dare not hope it. My brain wanders uncertain, I cannot come to any resolution, and therefore I have recourse to you."

"But what causes your suspicions?"

"Her coldness, which sometimes succeeds to apparent tenderness. The refusals she gives me in the name of duty. Yes," added the half-caste, after a moment's silence, she reasons about her love—a proof, that she has never loved me, or that she loves me no more."

"On the contrary, she perhaps loves you all the more, that she takes into consideration the interest and the dignity of her love."

"That is what they all say," replied the half caste, with bitter irony, as he fixed a penetrating look on Djalma; "thus speak all those who love weakly, coldly; but those who love valiantly, never show these insulting suspicions. For them, a word from the man they adore is a command; they do not haggle and bargain, for the cruel pleasure of exciting the passion of their lover to madness, and so ruling him more surely. No, what their lover asks of them, were it to cost life and honor, they would grant it without hesitation—because, with them, the will of the man they love is above every other consideration, divine and human. But those crafty women, whose pride it is to tame and conquer man—who take delight in irritating his passion, and sometimes appear on the point of yielding to it—are demons, who rejoice in the tears and torments of the wretch, that loves them with the miserable weakness of a child. While we expire with love at their feet, the perfidious creatures are calculating the effects of their refusals, and seeing how far they can go, without quite driving their victim to despair. Oh! how cold and cowardly are they, compared to the valiant, true-hearted women, who say to the men of their choice: "Let me be thine to-day—and to-morrow, come shame, despair, and death—it matters little! Be happy! my life is not worth one tear of thine!"

Djalma's brow had darkened, as he listened. Having kept inviolable the secret of the various incidents of his passion for Mdlle de Cardoville, he could not but see in these words a quite involuntary allusion to the delays and refusals of Adrienne. And yet Djalma suffered a moment in his pride, at the thought of considerations and duties, that a woman holds dearer than her love. But this bitter and

painful thought was soon effaced from the oriental's mind, thanks to the beneficent influence of the remembrance of Adrienne. His brow again cleared, and he answered the half-caste, who was watching him attentively with a side-long glance: "You are deluded by grief. If you have no other reason to doubt her you love, than these refusals and vague suspicions, be satisfied! You are perhaps loved better than you can imagine."

"Alas! would it were so, my lord!" replied the half caste, dejectedly, as if he had been deeply touched by the words of Djalma. "Yet I say to myself: There is for this woman something stronger than her love—delicacy, dignity, honor, what you will—but she does not love me enough to sacrifice for me this something!"

"Friend, you are deceived," answered Djalma, mildly, though the words affected him with a painful impression. "The greater the love of a woman, the more it should be chaste and noble. It is love itself that awakens this delicacy and these scruples. He rules, instead of being ruled."

"That is true," replied the half-caste, with bitter irony. "Love so rules me, that this woman bids me love in her own fashion, and I have only to submit."

Pausing suddenly, Faringhea hid his face in his hands, and heaved a deep-drawn sigh. His features expressed a mixture of hate, rage, and despair, at once so terrible and so painful, that Djalma, more and more affected, exclaimed, as he seized the other's hand: "Calm this fury, and listen to the voice of friendship! It will disperse this evil influence. Speak to me!"

"No, no! it is too dreadful!"

"Speak, I bid thee."

"No! leave the wretch to his despair!"

"Do you think me capable of that?" said Djalma, with a mixture of mildness and dignity, which seemed to make an impression on the half-caste.

"Alas!" replied he, hesitating; "do you wish to hear more, my lord?"

"I wish to hear all."

"Well, then! I have not told you all—for, at the moment of making this confession, shame and the fear of ridicule kept me back. You asked me what reason I had to believe myself betrayed. I spoke to you of vague suspicions, refusals, coldness. That is not all—this evening——"

"Go on!"

"This evening—she made an appointment—with a man that she prefers to me."

"Who told you so?"

"A stranger who pitied my blindness."

"And suppose the man deceives you—or deceives himself?"

"He has offered me proofs of what he advances."

"What proofs?"

"He will enable me this evening to witness the interview 'It may be,' said he, 'that this appointment may have no guilt in it, notwithstanding appearances to the contrary. Judge for yourself, have courage, and your cruel indecision will be at an end.'"

"And what did you answer?"

"Nothing, my lord. My head wandered as it does now, and I came to you for advice."

Then making a gesture of despair, he proceeded with a savage laugh: "Advice? It is from the blade of my kandjiar that I should ask counsel! It would answer: 'Blood! blood!'"

Faringhea grasped convulsively the long dagger attached to his girdle. There is a sort of contagion in certain forms of passion. At sight of Faringhea's countenance, agitated by jealous fury, Djalma shuddered—for he remembered the fit of insane rage, with which he had been possessed, when the Princess de Saint-Dizier had defied Adrienne to contradict her, as to the discovery of Agricola Baudoin in her bed-chamber. But then, reassured by the lady's proud and noble bearing, Djalma had soon learned to despise the horrible calumny, which Adrienne had not even thought worthy of an answer. Still, two or three times, as the lightning will flash suddenly across the clearest sky, the remembrance of that shameful accusation had crossed the prince's mind, like a streak of fire, but had almost instantly vanished, in the serenity and happiness of his ineffable confidence in Adrienne's heart. These memories, however, whilst they saddened the mind of Djalma, only made him more compassionate with regard to Faringhea, than he might have been without this strange coincidence between the position of the half-caste and his own. Knowing, by his own experience, to what madness a blind fury may be carried, and wishing to tame the half-caste by affectionate kindness, Djalma said to him in a grave and mild tone: "I offered you my friendship. I will now act towards you as a friend."

But Faringhea, seemingly a prey to a dull and mute frenzy, stood with fixed and haggard eyes, as though he did not hear Djalma.

The latter laid his hand on his shoulder, and resumed: "Faringhea, listen to me!"

"My lord," said the half-caste, starting abruptly, as from a dream, "forgive me—but——"

"In the anguish occasioned by these cruel suspicions, it is not of your kandjiar that you must take counsel—but of your friend."

"My lord——"

"To this interview, which will prove the innocence or the treachery of your beloved, you will do well to go."

"Oh, yes!" said the half-caste, in a hollow voice, and with a bitter smile: "I shall be there."

"But you must not go alone."

"What do you mean, my lord?" cried the half-caste. "Who will accompany me?"

"I will."

"You, my lord?"

"Yes—perhaps, to save you from a crime—for I know how blind and unjust is the earliest outburst of rage."

"But that transport gives us revenge!" cried the half-caste, with a cruel smile.

"Faringhea, this day is all my own. I shall not leave you," said the prince, resolutely. "Either you shall not go to this interview, or I will accompany you."

The half-caste appeared conquered by this generous perseverance. He fell at the feet of Djalma, pressed the prince's hand respectfully to his forehead and to his lips, and said: "My lord, be generous to the end! forgive me!"

"For what should I forgive you?"

Before I spoke to you, I had the audacity to think of asking for what you have just freely offered. Not knowing to what extent my fury might carry me, I had thought of asking you this favor, which you would not perhaps grant to an equal, but I did not dare to do it. I shrunk even from the avowal of the treachery I have cause to fear, and I came only to tell you of my misery—because to you alone in all the world I could tell it."

It is impossible to describe the almost candid simplicity, with which the half-breed pronounced these words, and the soft tones, mingled with tears, which had succeeded his savage fury. Deeply affected, Djalma raised him from the

ground, and said: "You were entitled to ask of me a mark of friendship. I am happy in having forestalled you. Courage! be of good cheer! I will accompany you to this interview, and, if my hopes do not deceive me, you will find you have been deluded by false appearances."

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When the night was come, the half-breed and Djalma, wrapped in their cloaks, got into a hackney-coach. Faringhea ordered the coachman to drive to the house inhabited by Sainte-Colombe.

CHAPTER LXIV.

AN EVENING AT SAINTE-COLOMBE'S.

LEAVING Djalma and Faringhea in the coach, on their way, a few words are indispensable before continuing this scene. Ninny Moulin, ignorant of the real object of the step he took at the instigation of Rodin, had, on the evening before, according to orders received from the latter, offered a considerable sum to Sainte-Colombe, to obtain from that creature (still singularly rapacious) the use of her apartments for a whole day. Sainte-Colombe, having accepted this proposition, too advantageous to be refused, had set out that morning with her servants, to whom she wished, she said, in return for their good services, to give a day's pleasure in the country. Master of the house, Rodin, in a black wig, blue spectacles, and a cloak, and with his mouth and chin buried in a worsted comforter—in a word, perfectly disguised—had gone that morning to take a look at the apartments, and to give his instructions to the half-caste. The latter, in two hours from the departure of the Jesuit, had, thanks to his address and intelligence, completed the most important preparations, and returned in haste to Djalma, to play with detestable hypocrisy the scene at which we have just been present.

During the ride from the Rue de Clichy to the Rue de Richelieu, Faringhea appeared plunged in a mournful reverie. Suddenly, he said to Djalma in a quick tone: "My lord, if I am betrayed, I must have vengeance."

"Contempt is a terrible revenge," answered Djalma.

"No, no," replied the half-caste, with an accent of repressed rage. "It is not enough. The nearer the moment approaches, the more I feel I must have blood."

"Listen to me——"

"My lord, have pity on me! I was a coward to draw back from my revenge. Let me leave you, my lord! I will go alone to this interview."

So saying, Faringhea made a movement, as if he would spring from the carriage.

Djalma held him by the arm, and said: "Remain! I will not leave you. If you are betrayed, you shall not shed blood. Contempt will avenge and friendship will console you."

"No, no, my lord; I am resolved. When I have killed—then I will kill myself," cried the half-caste, with savage excitement. "This kandjiar for the false ones!" added he, laying his hand on his dagger. "The poison in the hilt for me."

"Faringhea——"

"If I resist you, my lord, forgive me! My destiny must be accomplished."

Time pressed, and Djalma, despairing to calm the other's ferocious rage, resolved to have recourse to a stratagem.

After some minutes' silence, he said to Faringhea: "I will not leave you. I will do all I can to save you from a crime. If I do not succeed, the blood you shed be on your own head. This hand shall never again be locked in yours."

These words appeared to make a deep impression on Faringhea. He breathed a long sigh, and, bowing his head upon his breast, remained silent and full of thought. Djalma prepared, by the faint light of the lamps reflected in the interior of the coach, to throw himself suddenly on the half-caste, and disarm him. But the latter, who saw at a glance the intention of the prince, drew his kandjiar abruptly from his girdle, and holding it still in its sheath, said to the prince in a half-solemn, half-savage tone: "This dagger, in a strong hand, is terrible; and in this phial is one of the mose subtle poisons of our country."

He touched a spring, and the knob at the top of the hilt rose like a lid, discovering the mouth of a small crystal phial concealed in this murderous weapon.

"Two or three drops of this poison upon the lips," resumed the half-caste, "and death comes slowly and peacefully, in a few hours, and without pain. Only, for the first symptom, the nails turn blue. But he who emptied this phial at a draught would fall dead, as if struck by lightning."

"Yes," replied Djalma; "I know that our country produces such mysterious poisons. But why lay such stress on the murderous properties of this weapon?"

"To show you, my lord, that this kandjiar would ensure the success and impunity of my vengeance. With the blade I could destroy, and by the poison escape from human justice. Well, my lord! this kandjiar—take it—I give it up to you—I renounce my vengeance—rather than render myself unworthy to clasp again your hand!"

He presented the dagger to the prince, who, as pleased as surprised at this unexpected determination, hastily secured the terrible weapon beneath his own girdle, whilst the half-breed continued, in a voice of emotion: "Keep this kandjiar, my lord—and when you have seen and heard all that we go to hear and see—you shall either give me the dagger to strike a wretch—or the poison, to die without striking. You shall command; I will obey."

Djalma was about to reply, when the coach stopped at the house inhabited by Sainte-Colombe. The prince and the half-caste, well enveloped in their mantles, entered a dark porch, and the door was closed after them. Faringhea exchanged a few words with the porter, and the latter gave him a key. The two orientals soon arrived at Sainte-Colombe's apartments, which had two doors opening upon the landing-place, besides a private entrance from the courtyard. As he put the key into the lock, Faringhea said to Djalma, in an agitated voice: "Pity my weakness, my lord—but, at this terrible moment, I tremble and hesitate. It were perhaps better to doubt—or to forget!"

Then, as the prince was about to answer, the half-caste exclaimed: "No! we must have no cowardice!" and, opening the door precipitately, he entered, followed by Djalma.

When the door was again closed, the prince and the half-caste found themselves in a dark and narrow passage. "Your hand, my lord—let me guide you—walk lightly," said Faringhea, in a low whisper.

He extended his hand to the prince, who took hold of it, and they both advanced silently through the darkness. After leading Djalma some distance, and opening and closing several doors, the half-caste stopped abruptly, and abandoning the hand which he had hitherto held, said to the prince: "My lord, the decisive moment approaches; let us wait here for a few seconds."

A profound silence followed these words of the half-caste. The darkness was so complete, that Djalma could distinguish nothing. In about a minute, he heard Faringhea moving away from him; and then a door was suddenly opened, and as abruptly closed and locked. This circumstance made

Djalma somewhat uneasy. By a mechanical movement, he laid his hand upon his dagger, and advanced cautiously towards the side, where he supposed the door to be.

Suddenly, the half-caste's voice struck upon his ear, though it was impossible to guess whence it came. "My lord," it said, "you told me, you were my friend. I act as a friend. If I have employed stratagem to bring you hither, it is because the blindness of your fatal passion would otherwise have prevented your accompanying me. The Princess de Saint-Dizier named to you Agricola Baudoin, the lover of Adrienne de Cardoville. Listen—look—judge!"

The voice ceased. It appeared to have issued from one corner of the room. Djalma, still in darkness, perceived too late into what a snare he had fallen, and trembled with rage —almost with alarm.

"Faringhea!" he exclaimed; "where am I? where are you? Open the door on your life! I would leave this place instantly."

Extending his arms, the prince advanced hastily several steps, but he only touched a tapestried wall; he followed it, hoping to find the door, and he at length found it; but it was locked, and resisted all his efforts. He continued his researches, and came to a fireplace with no fire in it, and to a second door, equally fast. In a few moments, he had thus made the circle of the room, and found himself again at the fireplace. The anxiety of the prince increased more and more. He called Faringhea, in a voice trembling with passion. There was no answer. Profound silence reigned without, and complete darkness within. Ere long, a perfumed vapor, of indescribable sweetness, but very subtle and penetrating, spread itself insensibly through the little room in which Djalma was. It might be, that the orifice of a tube, passing through one of the doors of the room, introduced this balmy current. At the height of angry and terrible thoughts, Djalma paid no attention to this odor—but soon the arteries of his temples began to beat violently, a burning heat seemed to circulate rapidly through his veins, he felt a sensation of pleasure, his resentment died gradually away, and a mild, ineffable torpor crept over him, without his being fully conscious of the mental transformation that was taking place. Yet, by a last effort of the wavering will, Djalma advanced once more to try and open one of the doors; he found it indeed, but at this place the vapor was so strong, that its action redoubled, and, unable to move a step further, Djalma

was obliged to support himself by leaning against the wall.*

Then a strange thing happened. A faint light spread itself gradually through an adjoining apartment, and Djalma now perceived, for the first time, the existence of a little round window, in the wall of the room in which he was. On the side of the prince, this opening was protected by a slight but strong railing, which hardly intercepted the view. On the other side a thick piece of plate glass was fixed at the distance of two or three inches from the railing in question. The room, which Djalma saw through this window, and through which the faint light was now gradually spreading, was richly furnished. Between two windows, hung with crimson silk curtains, stood a kind of wardrobe, with a looking-glass front; opposite the fireplace, in which glowed the burning coals, was a long, wide divan, furnished with cushions.

In another second a woman entered this apartment. Her face and figure were invisible, being wrapped in a long, hooded mantle, of peculiar form, and a dark color. The sight of this mantle made Djalma start. To the pleasure he at first felt succeeded a feverish anxiety, like the growing fumes of intoxication. There was that strange buzzing in his ears which we experience when we plunge into deep waters. It was in a kind of delirium that Djalma looked on at what was passing in the next room. The woman who had just appeared entered with caution, almost with fear. Drawing aside one of the window curtains, she glanced through the closed blinds into the street. Then she returned slowly to the fireplace, where she stood for a moment pensive, still carefully enveloped in her mantle. Completely yielding to the influence of the vapor, which deprived him of his presence of mind—forgetting Faringhea, and all the circumstances that had accompanied his arrival at this house—Djalma concentrated all the powers of his attention on the spectacle before him, at which he seemed to be present as in a dream.

Suddenly Djalma saw the woman leave the fireplace and advance towards the looking-glass. Turning her face toward it, she allowed the mantle to glide down to her feet. Djalma was thunderstruck. He saw the face of Adrienne de Cardoville. Yes, Adrienne, as he had seen her the night before,

* See the strange effect of hasheesh. To the effect of this is attributed the kind of hallucination which seized on those unhappy persons, who the Prince of the Assassins (the Old Man of the Mountain) used as the instruments of his vengeance.

attired as during her interview with the Princess de Saint-Dizier—the light green dress, the rose-colored ribbons, the white bead ornaments. A network of white beads concealed her back hair, and harmonized admirably with the shining gold of her ringlets. Finally, as far as the Hindoo could judge through the railing and the thick glass, and in the faint light, it was the figure of Adrienne, with her marble shoulders and swan-like neck, so proud and so graceful. In a word, he could not, he did not doubt that it was Adrienne de Cardoville. Djalma was bathed in a burning dew, his dizzy excitement increased, and, with bloodshot eye and heaving bosom, he remained motionless, gazing almost without the power of thought. The young lady, with her back still turned towards Djalma, arranged her hair with graceful art, took off the network which formed her head-dress, placed it on the chimney-piece, and began to unfasten her gown; then, withdrawing from the looking-glass, she disappeared for an instant from Djalma's view.

"She is expecting Agricola Baudoin, her lover," said a voice, which seemed to proceed from the wall of the dark room in which Djalma was.

Notwithstanding his bewilderment, these terrible words, "She is expecting Agricola Baudoin, her lover," passed like a stream of fire through the brain and heart of the prince. A cloud of blood came over his eyes, he uttered a hollow groan, which the thickness of the glass prevented from being heard in the next room, and broke his nails in attempting to tear down the iron railing before the window.

Having reached this paroxysm of delirious rage, Djalma saw the uncertain light grow still fainter, as if it had been discreetly obscured, and, through the vapory shadow that hung before him, he perceived the young lady returning, clad in a long white dressing-gown, and with her golden curls floating over her naked arms and shoulders. She advanced cautiously in the direction of a door which was hid from Djalma's view. At this moment, one of the doors of the apartment in which the prince was concealed was gently opened by an invisible hand. Djalma noticed it by the click of the lock, and by the current of fresh air which streamed upon his face, for he could see nothing. This door, left open for Djalma, like that in the next room, to which the young lady had drawn near, led to a sort of ante-chamber communicating with the stairs, which some one now rapidly ascended, and, stopping short, knocked twice at the outer door.

"Here comes Agricola Baudoin. Look and listen!" said the same voice that the prince had already heard.

Mad, intoxicated, but with the fixed idea and reckless determination of a madman or a drunkard, Djalma drew the dagger which Faringhea had left in his possession, and stood in motionless expectation. Hardly were the two knocks heard before the young lady quitted the apartment, from which streamed a faint ray of light, ran to the door of the staircase, so that some faint glimmer reached the place where Djalma stood watching, his dagger in his hand. He saw the young lady pass across the ante-chamber, and approach the door of the staircase, where she said in a whisper: "Who is there?"

"It is I—Agricola Baudoin," answered, from without, a manly voice.

What followed was rapid as lightning, and must be conceived rather than described. Hardly had the young lady drawn the bolt of the door, hardly had Agricola Baudoin stepped across the threshold, than Djalma, with the bound of a tiger, stabbed as it were at once, so rapid were the strokes, both the young lady, who fell dead on the floor, and Agricola, who sank, dangerously wounded, by the side of the unfortunate victim. This scene of murder, rapid as thought, took place in the midst of a half obscurity. Suddenly the faint light from the chamber was completely extinguished, and a second after, Djalma felt his arm seized in the darkness by an iron grasp, and the voice of Faringhea whispered: "You are avenged. Come; we can secure our retreat." Inert, stupefied at what he had done, Djalma offered no resistance, and let himself be dragged by the half-caste into the inner apartment, from which there was another way out.

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When Rodin had exclaimed, in his admiration of the generative power of thought, that the word NECKLACE had been the germ of the infernal project he then contemplated, it was, that chance had brought to his mind the remembrance of the too famous affair of the diamond necklace, in which a woman, thanks to her vague resemblance to Queen Marie Antoinette, being dressed like that princess, and favored by the uncertainty of a twilight, had played so skilfully the part of her unfortunate sovereign, as to make the Cardinal Prince de Rohan, though familiar with the court, the complete dupe of the illusion. Having once determined on his execrable design, Rodin had sent Jacques Du-

moulin to Sainte-Colombe, without telling him the real object of his mission, to ask this experienced woman to procure a fine young girl, tall, and with red hair. Once found, a costume exactly resembling that worn by Adrienne, and of which the Princess de Saint-Dizier gave the description to Rodin (though herself ignorant of this new plot), was to complete the deception. The rest is known, or may be guessed. The unfortunate girl, who acted as Adrienne's double, believed she was only aiding in a jest. As for Agricola, he had received a letter, in which he was invited to a meeting that might be of the greatest importance to Mdlle. de Cardoville.

CHAPTER LXV.

THE NUPTIAL BED.

The mild light of a circular lamp of oriental alabaster, suspended from the ceiling by three silver chains, spreads a faint lustre through the bedchamber of Adrienne de Cardoville. The large ivory bedstead, inlaid with mother-of-pearl, is not at present occupied, and almost disappears beneath snowy curtains of lace and muslin, transparent and vapory as clouds. On the white marble mantelpiece, from beneath which the fire throws ruddy beams on the ermine carpet, is the usual basket filled with a bush of red camellias, in the midst of their shining green leaves. A pleasant aromatic odor, rising from a warm and perfumed bath in the next room, penetrates every corner of the bedchamber. All without is calm and silent. It is hardly eleven o'clock. The ivory door, opposite to that which leads to the bath-room, opens slowly. Djalma appears. Two hours have elapsed since he committed a double murder, and believed that he had killed Adrienne in a fit of jealous fury.

The servants of Mdlle. de Cardoville, accustomed to Djalma's daily visits, no longer announced his arrival, and admitted him without difficulty, having received no orders to the contrary from their mistress. He had never before entered the bedchamber, but, knowing that the apartment the lady occupied was on the first floor of the house, he had easily found it. As he entered that virgin sanctuary, his countenance was pretty calm, so well did he control his feelings; only a slight paleness tarnished the brilliant amber of his complexion. He wore that day a robe of purple cashmere, striped

with silver—a color which did not show the stains of blood upon it. Djalma closed the door after him, and tore off his white turban, for it seemed to him as if a band of hot iron encircled his brow. His dark hair streamed around his handsome face. He crossed his arms upon his bosom, and looked slowly about him. When his eyes rested on Adrienne's bed, he started suddenly, and his cheek grew purple. Then he drew his hand across his brow, hung down his head, and remained standing for some moments in a dream, motionless as a statue.

After a mournful silence of a few seconds' duration, Djalma fell upon his knees, and raised his eyes to heaven. The Asiatic's countenance was bathed in tears, and no longer expressed any violent passion. On his features was no longer the stamp of hate, or despair, or the ferocious joy of vengeance gratified. It was rather the expression of grief at once simple and immense. For several minutes he was almost choked with sobs, and the tears ran freely down his cheeks.

"Dead! dead!" he murmured, in a half-stifled voice. "She, who this morning slept so peacefully in this chamber! And I have killed her. Now that she is dead, what is her treachery to me? I should not have killed her for that. She had betrayed me; she loved the man whom I slew—she loved him! Alas! I could not hope to gain the preference," added he, with a touching mixture of resignation and remorse; "I, poor, untaught youth—how could I merit her love? It was my fault that she did not love me; but, always generous, she concealed from me her indifference, that she might not make me too unhappy—and for that I killed her. What was her crime? Did she not meet me freely? Did she not open to me her dwelling? Did she not allow me to pass whole days with her? No doubt she tried to love me, and could not. I loved her with all the faculties of my soul, but my love was not such as she required. For that, I should not have killed her. But a fatal delusion seized me, and, after it was done, I woke as from a dream. Alas! it was not a dream: I have killed her. And yet—until this evening—what happiness I owed to her—what hope—what joy! She made my heart better, nobler, more generous. All came from her," added the Indian, with a new burst of grief. "That remained with me—no one could take from me that treasure of the past—that ought to have consoled me. But why think of it? I struck them both—her and the man—without a struggle. It was a

cowardly murder—the ferocity of the tiger that tears its innocent prey!"

Djalma buried his face in his hands. Then, drying his tears, he resumed, "I know, clearly, that I mean to die also. But my death will not restore her to life!"

He rose from the ground, and drew from his girdle Faringhea's bloody dagger; then, taking the little phial from the hilt, he threw the blood-stained blade upon the ermine carpet, the immaculate whiteness of which was thus slightly stained with red.

"Yes," resumed Djalma, holding the phial with a convulsive grasp, "I know well that I am about to die. It is right. Blood for blood; my life for hers. How happens it that my steel did not turn aside? How could I kill her?—but it is done—and my heart is full of remorse, and sorrow, an inexpressible tenderness—and I have come here—to die!

"Here, in this chamber," he continued, "the heaven of my burning visions!" And then he added, with a heart-rending accent, as he again buried his face in his hands, "Dead! dead!"

"Well! I too shall soon be dead," he resumed, in a firmer voice. "But, no! I will die slowly, gradually. A few drops of the poison will suffice; and, when I am quite certain of dying, my remorse will perhaps be less terrible. Yesterday, she pressed my hand when we parted. Who could have foretold me this?" The Indian raised the phial resolutely to his lips. He drank a few drops of the liquor it contained, and replaced it on a little ivory table close to Adrienne's bed.

"This liquor is sharp and hot," said he. "Now I am certain to die. Oh! that I may still have time to feast on the sight and perfume of this chamber—to lay my dying head on the couch where she has reposed."

Djalma fell on his knees beside the bed, and leaned against it his burning brow. At this moment, the ivory door, which communicated with the bath-room, rolled gently on its hinges, and Adrienne entered. The young lady had just sent away her woman, who had assisted to undress her. She wore a long muslin wrapper of lustrous whiteness. Her golden hair, neatly arranged in little plaits, formed two bands, which gave to her sweet face an extremely juvenile air. Her snowy complexion was slightly tinged with rose-color, from the warmth of the perfumed bath, which she used for a few seconds every evening. When she opened the ivory door, and placed her little naked foot, in its white

satin slipper, upon the ermine carpet, Adrienne was dazzlingly beautiful. Happiness sparkled in her eyes, and adorned her brow. All the difficulties relative to her union with Djalma had now been removed. In two days she would be his. The sight of the nuptial chamber oppressed her with a vague and ineffable languor. The ivory door had been opened so gently, the lady's first steps were so soft upon the fur carpet, that Djalma, still leaning against the bed, had heard nothing. But suddenly a cry of surprise and alarm struck upon his ear. He turned round abruptly. Adrienne stood before him.

With an impulse of modesty, Adrienne closed her nightdress over her bosom, and hastily drew back, still more afflicted than angry at what she considered a guilty attempt on the part of Djalma. Cruelly hurt and offended, she was about to reproach him with his conduct, when she perceived the dagger, which he had thrown down upon the ermine carpet. At sight of this weapon, and the expression of fear and stupor which petrified the features of Djalma, who remained kneeling, motionless, with his body thrown back, his hands stretched out, his eyes fixed and wildly staring—Adrienne, no longer dreading an amorous surprise, was seized with an indescribable terror, and, instead of flying from the prince, advanced several steps towards him, and said, in an agitated voice, whilst she pointed to the kandjiar, "My friend, why are you here? what ails you? why this dagger?"

Djalma made no answer. At first, the presence of Adrienne seemed to him a vision, which he attributed to the excitement of his brain, already (it might be) under the influence of the poison. But when the soft voice sounded in his ears—when his heart bounded with the species of electric shock, which he always felt when he met the gaze of that woman so ardently beloved—when he had contemplated for an instant that adorable face, so fresh and fair, in spite of its expression of deep uneasiness—Djalma understood that he was not the sport of a dream, but that Mdlle. de Cardoville was really before his eyes.

Then, as he began fully to grasp the thought that Adrienne was not dead, though he could not at all explain the prodigy of her resurrection, the Hindoo's countenance was transfigured, the pale gold of his complexion became warm and red, his eyes (tarnished by tears of remorse) shone with new radiance, and his features, so lately contracted with terror and despair, expressed all the phases of the most ecstatic

joy. Advancing, still on his knees, towards Adrienne, he lifted up to her his trembling hands, and, too deeply affected to pronounce a word, he gazed on her with so much amazement, love, adoration, gratitude, that the young lady, fascinated by those inexplicable looks, remained mute also, motionless also, and felt, by the precipitate beating of her heart, and by the shudder which ran through her frame, that there was here some dreadful mystery to be unfolded.

At last, Djalma, clasping his hands together, exclaimed with an accent impossible to describe, "Thou art not dead!"

"Dead!" repeated the young lady, in amazement.

"It was not thou, really not thou, whom I killed? God is kind and just!"

And as he pronounced these words with intense joy, the unfortunate youth forgot the victim whom he had sacrificed in error.

More and more alarmed, and again glancing at the dagger, on which she now perceived marks of blood—a terrible evidence, in confirmation of the words of Djalma—Mdlle. de Cardoville exclaimed, "You have killed some one, Djalma! Oh! what does he say? It is dreadful!"

"You are alive—I see you—you are here," said Djalma, in a voice trembling with rapture. "You are here—beautiful! pure! for it was not you! Oh, no! had it been you, the steel would have turned back upon myself."

"You have killed some one?" cried the young lady, beside herself with this unforeseen revelation, and clasping her hands in horror. "Why? whom did you kill?"

"I do not know. A woman that was like you—a man that I thought your lover—it was an illusion, a frightful dream—you are alive—you are here!"

And the oriental wept for joy.

"A dream? but no, it is not a dream. There is blood upon that dagger!" cried the young lady, as she pointed wildly to the kandjiar. "I tell you there is blood upon it!"

"Yes. I threw it down just now, when I took the poison from it, thinking that I had killed you."

"The poison!" exclaimed Adrienne, and her teeth chattered convulsively. "What poison?"

"I thought I had killed you, and I came here to die."

"To die? Oh! wherefore? who is to die?" cried the young lady, almost in delirium.

"I," replied Djalma, with inexpressible tenderness, "I thought I had killed you—and I took poison."

"You!" exclaimed Adrienne, becoming pale as death. "You!"

"Yes."

"Oh! it is not true!" said the young lady, shaking her head.

"Look!" said the Asiatic. Mechanically, he turned towards the bed—towards the little ivory table, on which sparkled the crystal phial.

With a sudden movement, swifter than thought, swifter, it may be, than the will, Adrienne rushed to the table, seized the phial, and applied it eagerly to her lips.

Djalma had hitherto remained on his knees; but he now uttered a terrible cry, made one spring to the drinker's side, and dragged away the phial, which seemed almost glued to her mouth.

"No matter! I have swallowed as much as you," said Adrienne, with an air of gloomy triumph.

For an instant, there followed an awful silence. Adrienne and Djalma gazed upon each other, mute, motionless, horror-struck. The young lady was the first to break this mournful silence, and said in a tone which she tried to make calm and steady, "Well! what is there extraordinary in this? You have killed, and death must expiate your crime. It is just. I will not survive you. That also is natural enough. Why look at me thus? This poison has a sharp taste—does it act quickly! Tell me, my Djalma!"

The prince did not answer. Shuddering through all his frame, he looked down upon his hands. Faringhea had told the truth; a slight violet tint appeared already beneath the nails. Death was approaching, slowly, almost insensibly, but not the less certain. Overwhelmed with despair at the thought that Adrienne, too, was about to die, Djalma felt his courage fail him. He uttered a long groan, and hid his face in his hands. His knees shook under him, and he fell down upon the bed, near which he was standing.

"Already?" cried the young lady in horror, as she threw herself on her knees at Djalma's feet. "Death already? Do you hide your face from me?"

In her fright, she pulled his hands from before his face. That face was bathed in tears.

"No, not yet," murmured he, through his sobs. "The poison is slow."

"Really!" cried Adrienne, with ineffable joy. Then, kissing the hands of Djalma, she added tenderly, "If the poison is slow, why do you weep?"

"For you! for you!" said the Indian, in a heart-rending tone.

"Think not of me," replied Adrienne, resolutely. "You have killed, and we must expiate the crime. I know not what has taken place; but I swear by our love that you did not do evil for evil's sake. There is some horrible mystery in all this."

"On a pretence which I felt bound to believe," replied Djalma, speaking quickly, and panting for breath, "Faringhea led me to a certain house. Once there, he told me that you had betrayed me. I did not believe him, but I know not what strange dizziness seized upon me—and then, through a half-obscurity, I saw you——"

"Me!"

"No—not you—but a woman resembling you, dressed like you, so that I believed the illusion—and then there came a man—and you flew to meet him—and I—mad with rage—stabbed her, stabbed him, saw them fall—and so came here to die. And now I find you only to cause your death. Oh, misery! misery! that you should die through me!"

And Djalma, this man of formidable energy, began again to weep with the weakness of a child. At sight of this deep, touching, passionate despair, Adrienne, with that admirable courage which women alone possess in love, thought only of consoling Djalma. By an effort of superhuman passion, as the prince revealed to her this infernal plot, the lady's countenance became so splendid with an expression of love and happiness, that the East Indian looked at her in amazement, fearing for an instant that he must have lost his reason.

"No more tears, my adored!" cried the young lady, exultingly. "No more tears—but only smiles of joy and love! Our cruel enemies shall not triumph!"

"What do you say?"

"They wished to make us miserable. We pity them Our felicity shall be the envy of the world!"

"Adrienne—bethink you——"

"Oh! I have all my senses about me. Listen to me, my adored! I now understand it all. Falling into a snare, which these wretches spread for you, you have committed murder. Now, in this country, murder leads to infamy, or the scaffold—and to-morrow—to-night, perhaps—you would be thrown into prison. But our enemies have said: 'A man like Prince Djalma does not wait for infamy—he kills himself. A woman like Adrienne de Cardoville does not survive the disgrace or death of her lover—she prefers to die,

Therefore a frightful death awaits them both;' said the black-robed men; 'and that immense inheritance, which we covet——' "

"And for you—so young, so beautiful, so innocent—death is frightful, and these monsters triumph!" cried Djalma. "They have spoken the truth!"

"They have lied!" answered Adrienne. "Our death shall be celestial. This poison is slow—and I adore you, my Djalma!"

She spoke those words in a low voice, trembling with passionate love, and, leaning upon Djalma's knees, approached so near, that he felt her warm breath upon his cheek. As he felt that breath, and saw the humid flame that darted from the large, swimming eyes of Adrienne, whose half-opened lips were becoming of a still deeper and brighter hue, the Indian started—his young blood boiled in his veins—he forgot everything—his despair, and the approach of death, which as yet (as with Adrienne), only showed itself in a kind of feverish ardor. His face, like the young girl's, became once more splendidly beautiful.

"Oh, my lover! my husband! how beautiful you are!" said Adrienne, with idolatry. "Those eyes—that brow—those lips—how I love them!—How many times has the remembrance of your grace and beauty, coupled with your love, unsettled my reason, and shaken my resolves—even to this moment, when I am wholly yours!—Yes, heaven wills that we should be united. Only this morning, I gave to the apostolic man, that was to bless our union, in thy name and mine, a royal gift—a gift, that will bring joy and peace to the heart of many an unfortunate creature. Then what have we to regret, my beloved? Our immortal souls will pass away in a kiss, and ascend, full of love, to that God who is all love!"

"Adrienne!"

"Djalma!"

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The light, transparent curtains fell like a cloud over that nuptial and funereal couch. Yes, funereal; for, two hours after, Adrienne and Djalma breathed their last sigh in a voluptuous agony.

CHAPTER LXVI.

A DUEL TO THE DEATH.

Adrienne and Djalma died on the 30th of May. The following scene took place on the 31st, the eve of the day appointed for the last convocation of the heirs of Marius de Rennepont. The reader will no doubt remember the room occupied by M. Hardy, in the "house of retreat," in the Rue de Vaugirard—a gloomy and retired apartment, opening on a dreary little garden, planted with yew-trees, and surrounded by high walls. To reach this chamber, it was necessary to cross two vast rooms, the doors of which, once shut, intercepted all noise and communication from without. Bearing this in mind, we may go on with our narrative. For the last three or four days, Father d'Aigrigny occupied this apartment. He had not chosen it, but had been induced to accept it, under most plausible pretexts, given him at the instigation of Rodin. It was about noon. Seated in an arm-chair, by the window opening on the little garden, Father d'Aigrigny held in his hand a newspaper, in which he read as follows, under the head of "Paris:"

"Eleven p. m.—A most horrible and tragical event has just excited the greatest consternation in the quarter of the Rue de Richelieu. A double murder has been committed, on the person of a young man and woman. The girl was killed on the spot, by the stroke of a dagger; hopes are entertained of saving the life of the young man. The crime is attributed to jealousy. The officers of justice are investigating the matter. We shall give full particulars to-morrow."

When he had read these lines, Father d'Aigrigny threw down the paper and remained in deep thought.

"It is incredible," said he, with bitter envy, in allusion to Rodin. "He has attained his end. Hardly one of his anticipations has been defeated. This family is annihilated, by the mere play of the passions, good and evil, that he has known how to set in motion. He said it would be so. Oh! I must confess," added Father d'Aigrigny, with a jealous and hateful smile, "that Rodin is a man of rare dissimulation, patience, energy, obstinacy, and intelligence. Who would have told a few months ago, when he wrote under my orders, a discreet and humble socius, that he had already

conceived the most audacious ambition, and dared to lift his eyes to the Holy See itself? that, thanks to intrigues and corruption, pursued with wondrous ability, these views were not so unreasonable? Nay, that this infernal ambition would soon be realized, were it not that the secret proceedings of this dangerous man have long been as secretly watched?—Ah!" sneered Father d'Aigrigny, with a smile of irony and triumph, "you wish to be a second Sixtus V., do you? And, not content with this audacious pretension, you mean, if successful, to absorb our Company in the Papacy, even as the Sultan has absorbed the Janissaries. Ah! you would make *us* your stepping-stone to power! And you have thought to humiliate and crush me with your insolent disdain! But patience, patience: the day of retribution approaches. I alone am the depositary of our General's will. Father Caboccini himself does not know that. The fate of Rodin is in my hands. Oh! it will not be what he expects. In this Rennepont affair (which, I must needs confess, he has managed admirably), he thinks to outwit us all, and to work only for himself. But to-morrow——"

Father d'Aigrigny was suddenly disturbed in these agreeable reflections. He heard the door of the next room open, and, as he turned round to see who was coming, the door of the apartment in which he was turned upon its hinges. Father d'Aigrigny started with surprise, and became almost purple. Marshal Simon stood before him. And, behind the marshal, in the shadow of the door, Father d'Aigrigny perceived the cadaverous face of Rodin. The latter cast on him one glance of diabolical delight, and instantly disappeared. The door was again closed, and Father d'Aigrigny and Marshal Simon were left alone together. The father of Rose and Blanche was hardly recognizable. His gray hair had become completely white. His pale, thin face had not been shaved for some days. His hollow eyes were bloodshot and restless, and had in them something wild and haggard. He was wrapped in a large cloak, and his black cravat was tied loosely about his neck. In withdrawing from the apartment, Rodin had (as if by inadvertence) double-locked the door on the outside. When he was alone with the Jesuit, the marshal threw back his cloak from his shoulders, and Father d'Aigrigny could see two naked swords, stuck through a silk handkerchief which served him as a belt.

Father d'Aigrigny understood it all. He remembered how, a few days before, Rodin had obstinately pressed him to say what he would do if the marshal were to strike him

in the face. There could be no doubt that he, who thought to have held the fate of Rodin in his hands, had been brought by the latter into a fearful peril; for he knew that, the two outer rooms being closed, there was no possibility of making himself heard, and that the high walls of the garden only bordered upon some vacant lots. The first thought which occurred to him, one by no means destitute of probability, was that Rodin, either by his agents at Rome, or by his own incredible penetration, had learned that his fate depended on Father d'Aigrigny, and hoped therefore to get rid of him, by delivering him over to the inexorable vengeance of the father of Rose and Blanche. Without speaking a word, the marshal unbound the handkerchief from his waist, laid the two swords upon the table, and, folding his arms upon his breast, advanced slowly towards Father d'Aigrigny. Thus these two men, who through life had pursued each other with implacable hatred, at length met face to face—they, who had fought in hostile armies, and measured swords in single combat, and one of whom now came to seek vengeance for the death of his children. As the marshal approached, Father d'Aigrigny rose from his seat. He wore that day a black cassock, which rendered still more visible the pale hue, which had now succeeded to the sudden flush on his cheek. For a few seconds, the two men stood face to face without speaking. The marshal was terrific in his paternal despair. His calmness, inexorable as fate, was more impressive than the most furious burst of anger.

"My children are dead," said he at last, in a slow and hollow tone. "I come to kill you."

"Sir," cried Father d'Aigrigny, "listen to me. Do not believe——"

"I must kill you," resumed the marshal, interrupting the Jesuit; "your hate followed my wife into exile, where she perished. You and your accomplices sent my children to certain death. For twenty years you have been my evil genius. I must have your life, and I will have it."

"My life belongs, first, to God," answered Father d'Aigrigny, piously, "and then to who likes to take it."

"We will fight to the death in this room," said the marshal; "and, as I have to avenge my wife and children, I am tranquil as to the result."

"Sir," answered Father d'Aigrigny, coldly, "you forget that my profession forbids me to fight. Once I accepted your challenge—but my position is changed since then."

"Ah!" said the marshal, with a bitter smile; "you refuse to fight because you are a priest?"

"Yes, sir—because I am a priest."

"So that, because he is a priest, a wretch like you may commit any crime, any baseness, under shelter of his black gown?"

"I do not understand a word of your accusations. In any case, the law is open," said Father d'Aigrigny, biting his pale lips, for he felt deeply the insult offered by the marshal; "if you have anything to complain of, appeal to that law, before which all are equal."

Marshal Simon shrugged his shoulders in angry disdain. "Your crimes escape the law—and, could it even reach you, that would not satisfy my vengeance, after all the evil you have done me, after all you have taken from me," said the marshal; and, at the memory of his children, his voice slightly trembled; but he soon proceeded, with terrible calmness: "You must feel that I now only live for vengeance. And I must have such revenge as is worth the seeking—I must have your coward's heart palpitating on the point of my sword. Our last duel was play; this will be earnest—oh! you shall see."

The marshal walked up to the table, where he had laid the two swords. Father d'Aigrigny needed all his resolution to restrain himself. The implacable hate which he had always felt for Marshal Simon, added to these insults, filled him with savage ardor. Yet he answered, in a tone that was still calm: "For the last time, sir, I repeat to you, that my profession forbids me to fight."

"Then you refuse?" said the marshal, turning abruptly towards him.

"I refuse."

"Positively?"

"Positively. Nothing on earth should force me to it."

"Nothing?"

"No, sir; nothing."

"We shall see," said the marshal, as his hand fell with its full force on the cheek of Father d'Aigrigny.

The Jesuit uttered a cry of fury; all his blood rushed to his face, so roughly handled; the courage of the man (for he was brave), his ancient military ardor, carried him away; his eyes sparkled, and, with teeth firmly set, and clinched fists, he advanced towards the marshal, exclaiming: "The swords! the swords!"

But suddenly, remembering the appearance of Rodin, and

the interest which the latter had in bringing about this rencounter, he determined to avoid the diabolical snare laid by his former socius, and so gathered sufficient resolution to restrain his terrible resentment.

To his passing fury succeeded a calm, full of contrition; and, wishing to play his part out to the end, he knelt down, and bowing his head and beating his bosom, repeated: "Forgive me, Lord, for yielding to a movement of rage! and, above all, forgive him who has injured me!"

In spite of his apparent resignation, the Jesuit's voice was greatly agitated. He seemed to feel a hot iron upon his cheek, for never before in his life, whether as a soldier or a priest, had he suffered such an insult. He had thrown himself upon his knees, partly from religious mummery, and partly to avoid the gaze of the marshal, fearing that, were he to meet his eye, he should not be able to answer for himself, but give way to his impetuous feelings. On seeing the Jesuit kneel down, and on hearing his hypocritical invocation, the marshal, whose sword was in his hand, shook with indignation.

"Stand up, scoundrel!" he said, "stand up, wretch!" And he spurned the Jesuit with his boot.

At this new insult, Father d'Aigrigny leaped up, as if had been moved by steel springs. It was too much; he could bear no more. Blinded with rage, he rushed to the table, caught up the other sword, and exclaimed, grinding his teeth together: "Ah! you will have blood. Well, then! it shall be yours—if possible!"

And the Jesuit, still in all the vigor of manhood, his face purple, his large gray eyes sparkling with hate, fell upon his guard with the ease and skill of a finished swordsman.

"At last!" cried the marshal, as their blades were about to cross.

But once more reflection came to damp the fire of the Jesuit. He remembered how this hazardous duel would gratify the wishes of Rodin, whose fate was in his hands, and whom he hated perhaps even more than the marshal. Therefore, in spite of the fury which possessed him, in spite of his secret hope to conquer in this combat, so strong and healthy did he feel himself, and so fatal had been the effects of grief on the constitution of Marshal Simon, he succeeded in mastering his rage, and, to the amazement of the marshal, dropped the point of his sword, exclaiming: "I am a minister of the Lord, and must not shed blood. Forgive me, heaven! and, oh! forgive my brother also,"

Then, placing the blade beneath his heel, he drew the hilt suddenly towards him, and broke the weapon into two pieces. The duel was no longer possible. Father d'Aigrigny had put it out of his own power to yield to a new burst of violence, of which he saw the imminent danger. Marshal Simon remained for an instant mute and motionless with surprise and indignation, for he also saw that the duel was now impossible. But, suddenly, imitating the Jesuit, the marshal placed his blade also under his heel, broke it in half, and picking up the pointed end, about eighteen inches in length, tore off his black silk cravat, rolled it round the broken part so as to form a handle, and said to Father d'Aigrigny: "Then we will fight with daggers."

Struck with this mixture of coolness and ferocity, the Jesuit exclaimed: "Is this then a demon of hell?"

"No; it is a father, whose children have been murdered," said the marshal, in a hollow voice, whilst he fitted the blade to his hand, and a tear stood in the eye, that instantly after became fierce and ardent.

The Jesuit saw that tear. There was in this mixture of vindictive rage and paternal grief something so awful, and yet so sacred, that for the first time in his life Father d'Aigrigny felt fear—cowardly, ignoble fear—fear for his own safety. While a combat with swords was in question, in which skill, agility, and experience are such powerful auxiliaries to courage, his only difficulty had been to repress the ardor of his hate—but when he thought of the combat proposed, body to body, face to face, heart to heart, he trembled, grew pale, and exclaimed: "A butchery with knives?—never!"

His countenance and the accent betrayed his alarm, so that the marshal himself was struck with it, and fearing to lose his revenge, he cried: "After all, he is a coward! The wretch had only the courage or the vanity of a fencer. This pitiful renegade—this traitor to his country—whom I have cuffed, kicked—yes, kicked, most noble marquis!—shame of your ancient house—disgrace to the rank of gentleman, old or new—ah! it is not hypocrisy, it is not calculation, as I at first thought—it is fear! You need the noise of war, and the eyes of spectators to give you courage——"

"Sir—have a care!" said Father d'Aigrigny, stammering through his clinched teeth, for rage and hate now made him forget his fear——

"Must I then spit on you, to make the little blood you have left rise to your face?" cried the exasperated marshal.

"Oh! this is too much! too much!" said the Jesuit, seizing the pointed piece of the blade that lay at his feet.

"It is not enough!" said the marshal, panting for breath. "There, Judas!" and he spat in his face.

"If you will not fight now," added the marshal, "I will beat you like a dog, base child-murderer!"

On receiving the uttermost insult which can be offered to an already insulted man, Father d'Aigrigny lost all his presence of mind, forgot his interests, his resolutions, his fears, forgot even Rodin—felt only the frenzied ardor of revenge—and, recovering his courage, rejoiced in the prospect of a close struggle, in which his superior strength promised success over the enfeebled frame of the marshal—for, in this kind of brutal and savage combat, physical strength offers an immense advantage. In an instant, Father d'Aigrigny had rolled his handkerchief round the broken blade, and rushed upon Marshal Simon, who received the shock with intrepidity. For the short time that this unequal struggle lasted—unequal, for the marshal had since some days been a prey to a devouring fever, which had undermined his strength—the two combatants, mute in their fury, uttered not a word or a cry. Had any one been present at this horrible scene, it would have been impossible for him to tell how they dealt their blows. He would have seen two heads—frightful, livid, convulsed—rising, falling, now here, now there—arms, now stiff as bars of iron, and now twisting like serpents—and, in the midst of the undulation of the blue coat of the marshal and the black cassock of the Jesuit, from time to time the sudden gleam of the steel. He would have heard only a dull stamping, and now and then a deep breath. In about two minutes at most, the two adversaries fell, and rolled one over the other. One of them—it was Father d'Aigrigny—contrived to disengage himself with a violent effort, and to rise upon his knees. His arms fell powerless by his side, and then the dying voice of the marshal murmured: "My children! Dagobert!"

"I have killed him," said Father d'Aigrigny, in a weak voice; "but I feel—that I am wounded—to death."

Leaning with one hand on the ground, the Jesuit pressed the other to his bosom. His black cassock was pierced through and through, but the blades, which had served for the combat, being triangular and very sharp, the blood instead of issuing from the wounds, was flowing inwards.

"Oh! I die—I choke," said Father d'Aigrigny, whose features were already changing with the approach of death.

At this moment, the key turned twice in the door, Rodin appeared on the threshold, and, thrusting in his head, he said in a humble and discreet voice: "May I come in?"

At this dreadful irony, Father d'Aigrigny strove to rise, and rush upon Rodin; but he fell back exhausted; the blood was choking him.

"Monster of hell!" he muttered, casting on Rodin a terrible glance of rage and agony. "Thou art the cause of my death."

"I always told you, my dear father, that your old military habits would be fatal to you," answered Rodin with a frightful smile. "Only a few days ago, I gave you warning, and advised you take a blow patiently from this old swordsman—who seems to have done with that work forever, which is well—for the Scripture says: 'All they that take the sword shall perish with the sword.' And then this Marshal Simon might have had some claim on his daughter's inheritance. And, between ourselves, my dear father, what was I to do? It was necessary to sacrifice you for the common interest; the rather, that I well knew what you had in pickle for me to-morrow. But I am not so easily caught napping."

"Before I die," said Father d'Aigrigny, in a failing voice, "I will unmask you."

"Oh, no, you will not," said Rodin, shaking his head with a knowing air; "I alone, if you please, will receive your last confession."

"Oh! this is horrible," moaned Father d'Aigrigny, whose eyes were closing. "May God have mercy on me, if it is not too late!—Alas! at this awful moment, I feel that I have been a great sinner——"

"And, above all, a great fool," said Rodin, shrugging his shoulders, and watching with cold disdain the dying moments of his accomplice.

Father d'Aigrigny had now but a few minutes more to live. Rodin perceived it, and said: "It is time to call for help." And the Jesuit ran, with an air of alarm and consternation, into the courtyard of the house.

Others came at his cries; but, as he had promised, Rodin had only quitted Father d'Aigrigny as the latter had breathed his last sigh.

* * * * * * *

That evening, alone in his chamber, by the glimmer of a little lamp, Rodin sat plunged in a sort of ecstatic contemplation, before the print representing Sixtus V. The great

house-clock struck twelve. At the last stroke, Rodin drew himself up in all the savage majesty of his infernal triumph, and exclaimed: "This is the first of June. There are no more Renneponts!—Methinks, I hear the hour from the clock of St. Peter's at Rome striking!"

CHAPTER LXVII.

A MESSAGE.

While Rodin sat plunged in ambitious reverie, contemplating the portrait of Sixtus V., good little Father Caboccini, whose warm embraces had so much irritated the first mentioned personage, went secretly to Faringhea, to deliver to him a fragment of an ivory crucifix, and said to him with his usual air of jovial good-nature: "His Excellency Cardinal Malipieri, on my departure from Rome, charged me to give you this only on the 31st of May."

The half-caste, who was seldom affected by anything, started abruptly, almost with an expression of pain. His face darkened, and bending upon the little father a piercing look, he said to him: "You were to add something."

"True," replied Father Caboccini; "the words I was to add are these: There is many a slip 'twixt the cup and the lip.'"

"It is well," said the other. Heaving a deep sigh, he joined the fragment of the ivory crucifix to a piece already in his possession; it fitted exactly.

Father Caboccini looked at him with curiosity, for the cardinal had only told him to deliver the ivory fragment to Faringhea, and to repeat the above words. Being somewhat mystified with all this, the reverend father said to the half-caste: "What are you going to do with that crucifix?"

"Nothing," said Faringhea, still absorbed in painful thought.

"Nothing?" resumed the reverend father, in astonishment. "What, then, was the use of bringing it so far?"

Without satisfying his curiosity, Faringhea replied: "At what hour to-morrow does Father Rodin go to the Rue Saint-François?"

"Very early."

"Before leaving home, he will go to say prayers in the chapel?"

"Yes, according to the habit of our reverend fathers."

"You sleep near him?"

"Being his socius, I occupy the room next to his."

"It is possible," said Faringhea, after a moment's silence, "that the reverend father, full of the great interests which occupy his mind, might forget to go to the chapel. In that case, pray remind him of this pious duty."

"I shall not fail."

"Pray do not fail," repeated Faringhea, anxiously.

"Be satisfied," said the good little father; "I see that you take great interest in his salvation."

"Great interest."

"It is very praiseworthy in you. Continue as you have begun, and you may one day belong completely to our Company," said Father Caboccini, affectionately.

"I am as yet but a poor auxiliary member," said Faringhea, humbly; "but no one is more devoted to the Society, body and soul. Bowanee is nothing to it."

"Bowanee! who is that, my good friend?"

"Bowanee makes corpses which rot in the ground. The Society makes corpses which walk about."

"Ah, yes! Perindè ac cadaver—they were the last words of our great saint, Ignatius de Loyola. But who is this Bowanee?"

"Bowanee is to the Society what a child is to a man," replied the Asiatic, with growing excitement. "Glory to the Company—glory! Were my father its enemy, I would kill my father. The man whose genius inspires me most with admiration, respect, and terror—were he its enemy, I would kill, in spite of all," said the half caste, with an effort. Then, after a moment's silence, he looked full in Caboccini's face, and added: "I say this, that you may report my words to Cardinal Malipieri, and beg him to mention them to——"

Faringhea stopped short. "To whom should the cardinal mention your words?" asked Caboccini.

"He knows," replied the half-caste, abruptly. "Good-night!"

"Good-night, my friend! I can only approve of your excellent sentiments with regard to our Company. Alas! it is in want of energetic defenders, for there are said to be traitors in its bosom."

"For those," said Faringhea, "we must have no pity."

"Certainly," said the good little father; "we understand one another."

"Perhaps," said the half-caste. "Do not, at all events,

forget to remind Father Rodin to go to chapel to-morrow morning."

"I will take care of that," said Father Caboccini.

The two men parted. On his return to the house, Caboccini learned that a courier, only arrived that night from Rome, had brought despatches to Rodin.

CHAPTER LXVIII.

THE FIRST OF JUNE.

The chapel belonging to the house of the reverend fathers, in the Rue de Vaugirard, was gay and elegant. Large panes of stained glass admitted a mysterious light; the altar shone with gold and silver; and at the entrance of this little church, in an obscure corner beneath the organ-loft, was a font for holy water in sculptured marble. It was close to this font, in a dark nook where he could hardly be seen, that Faringhea knelt down, early on the 1st of June, as soon indeed as the chapel doors were opened. The half-caste was exceedingly sad. From time to time he started and sighed, as if agitated by a violent internal struggle. This wild, untamable being, possessed with the monomania of evil and destruction, felt, as may be imagined, a profound admiration for Rodin, who exercised over him a kind of magnetic fascination. The half-caste, almost a wild beast in human form, saw something supernatural in the infernal genius of Rodin. And the latter, too sagacious not to have discovered the savage devotion of this wretch, had made, as we have seen, good use of him, in bringing about the tragical termination of the loves of Adrienne and Djalma. But what excited to an incredible degree the admiration of Faringhea, was what he knew of the Society of Jesus. This immense, occult power, which undermined the world by its subterraneous ramifications, and reached its ends by diabolical means, had inspired the half-caste with a wild enthusiasm. And if anything in the world surpassed his fanatical admiration for Rodin, it was his blind devotion to the Company of Ignatius de Loyola, which, as he said, could make corpses that walk about. Hid in the shadow of the organ-loft, Faringhea was reflecting deeply on these things, when footsteps were heard, and Rodin entered the chapel, accompanied by his socius, the little one-eyed father.

Whether from absence of mind, or that the shadow of the orange-loft completely concealed the half-caste, Rodin dipped his fingers into the font without perceiving Faringhea, who stood motionless as a statue, though a cold sweat streamed from his brow. The prayer of Rodin was, as may be supposed, short; he was in haste to get to the Rue Saint-François. After kneeling down with Father Caboccini for a few seconds, he rose, bowed respectfully to the altar, and returned towards the door, followed by his socius. At the moment Rodin approached the font, he perceived the tall figure of the half-caste standing out from the midst of the dark shadow ; advancing a little, Faringhea bowed respectfully to Rodin, who said to him, in a low voice; "Come to me at two o'clock."

So saying, Rodin stretched forth his hand to dip it into the holy water; but Faringhea spared him the trouble, by offering him the sprinkling-brush, which generally stood in the font.

Pressing between his dirty fingers the damp hairs of the brush, which the half-caste held by the handle, Rodin wetted his thumb and forefinger, and, according to custom, traced the sign of the cross upon his forehead Then, opening the door of the chapel, he went out, after again repeating to Faringhea: "Come to me at two o'clock."

Thinking he would also make use of the sprinkling-brush, which, Faringhea, still motionless, held with a trembling hand, Father Caboccini stretched out his fingers to reach it, when the half-breed, as if determined to confine his favors to Rodin, hastily withdrew the instrument. Deceived in his expectation, Father Caboccini lost no time in following Rodin, whom he was not to leave that day for a single moment, and, getting into a hackney-coach with him, set out for the Rue Saint-François. It is impossible to describe the look which the half-breed fixed upon Rodin as the latter quitted the chapel. Left alone in the sacred edifice, Faringhea sank upon the stones, half kneeling, half crouching, with his face buried in his hands. As the coach drew near the quarter of the Marais, in which was situated the house of Marius de Rennepont, a feverish agitation, and the devouring impatience of triumph, were visible on the countenance of Rodin. Two or three times he opened his pocket-book, and read and arranged the different certificates of death of the various members of the Rennepont family; and from time to time he thrust his head anxiously from the coach-

window, as if he had wished to hasten the slow progress of the vehicle.

The good little father, his socius, did not take his eye off Rodin, and his look had a strange and crafty expression. At last the coach entered the Rue Saint-François, and stopped before the iron-studded door of the old house, which had been closed for a century and a half. Rodin sprang from the coach with the agility of a young man, and knocked violently at the door, whilst Father Caboccini, less light of foot, descended more prudently to the ground. No answer was returned to the loud knocking of Rodin. Trembling with anxiety, he knocked again. This time, as he listened attentively, he heard slow steps approaching. They stopped at some distance from the door, which was not yet opened.

"It is keeping one upon red-hot coals," said Rodin, for he felt as if there was a burning fire in his chest. He again shook the door violently, and began to gnaw his nails according to his custom.

Suddenly the door opened, and Samuel, the Jew guardian, appeared beneath the porch. The countenance of the old man expressed bitter grief. Upon his venerable cheeks were the traces of recent tears, which he strove to dry with his trembling hands, as he opened the door to Rodin.

"Who are you, gentlemen?" said Samuel.

"I am the bearer of a power of attorney from the Abbé Gabriel, the only living representative of the Rennepont family," answered Rodin, hastily. "This gentleman is my secretary," added he, pointing to Father Caboccini, who bowed.

After looking attentively at Rodin, Samuel resumed: "I recognize you, sir. Please to follow me." And the old guardian advanced towards the house in the garden, making a sign to the two reverend fathers to follow.

"That confounded old man kept me so long at the door," said Rodin to his socius, "that I think I have caught a cold in consequence. My lips and throat are dried up, like parchment baked at the fire."

"Will you not take something, my dear, good father? Suppose you were to ask this man for a glass of water," cried the little one-eyed priest, with tender solicitude.

"No, no," answered Rodin; "it is nothing. I am devoured by impatience. That is all."

Pale and desolate, Bathsheba, the wife of Samuel, was standing at the door of the apartment she occupied with her husband, in the building next the street. As the Jew

passed before her, he said, in Hebrew: "The curtains of the Hall of Mourning?"

"Are closed."

"And the iron casket?"

"Is prepared," answered Bathsheba, also in Hebrew.

After pronouncing these words, completely unintelligible to Rodin and Caboccini, Samuel and Bathsheba exchanged a bitter smile, notwithstanding the despair impressed on their countenances.

Ascending the steps, followed by the two reverend fathers, Samuel entered the vestibule of the house, in which a lamp was burning. Endowed with an excellent local memory, Rodin was about to take the direction of the Red Saloon, in which had been held the first convocation of the heirs, when Samuel stopped him, and said: "It is not that way."

Then, taking the lamp, he advanced towards a dark staircase, for the windows of the house had not been unbricked.

"But," said Rodin, "the last time, we met in a saloon on the ground floor."

"To-day, we must go higher," answered Samuel, as he began slowly to ascend the stairs.

"Where to? higher!" said Rodin, following him.

"To the Hall of Mourning," replied the Jew, and he continued to ascend.

"What is the Hall of Mourning?" resumed Rodin, in some surprise.

"A place of tears and death," answered the Israelite; and he kept on ascending through the darkness, for the little lamp threw but a faint light around.

"But," said Rodin, more and more astonished, and stopping short on the stairs, "why go to this place?"

"The money is there," answered Samuel, and he went on.

"Oh? if the money is there, that alters the case," replied Rodin; and he made haste to regain the few steps he had lost by stopping.

Samuel continued to ascend, and, at a turn of the staircase, the two Jesuits could see by the pale light of the little lamp, the profile of the old Israelite, in the space left between the iron balustrade and the wall, as he climbed on with difficulty above them. Rodin was struck with the expression of Samuel's countenance. His black eyes, generally so calm, sparkled with ardor. His features, usually impressed with a mixture of sorrow, intelligence, and goodness,

seemed to grow harsh and stern, and his thin lips wore a strange smile.

"It is not so very high," whispered Rodin to Caboccini, "and yet my legs ache, and I am quite out of breath. There is a strange throbbing too in my temples."

In fact, Rodin breathed hard, and with difficulty. To this confidential communication, good little Father Caboccini, in general so full of tender care for his colleague, made no answer. He seemed to be in deep thought.

"Will we soon be there?" said Rodin, impatiently, to Samuel.

"We are there," replied the Israelite.

"And a good thing too," said Rodin.

"Very good," said the Jew.

Stopping in the midst of a corridor, he pointed with the hand in which he held the lamp to a large door from which streamed a faint light. In spite of his growing surprise, Rodin entered resolutely, followed by Father Caboccini and Samuel. The apartment in which these three personages now found themselves was very large. The daylight only entered from a belvedere in the roof, the four sides of which had been covered with leaden plates, each of which was pierced with seven holes, forming a cross, thus:

Now, the light being only admitted through these holes, the obscurity would have been complete, had it not been for a lamp, which burned on a large massive slab of black marble, fixed against one of the walls. One would have taken it for a funeral chamber, for it was all hung with black curtains, fringed with white. There was no furniture, save the slab of black marble we have already mentioned. On this slab was an iron casket, of the manufacture of the seventeenth century, admirably adorned with open work, like lace made of metal.

Addressing Rodin, who was wiping his forehead with his dirty handkerchief, and looking round him with surprise, but not fear, Samuel said to him: "The will of the testator, however strange it may appear, is sacred with me, and must be accomplished in all things."

"Certainly," said Rodin; "but what are we to do here?"

"You will know presently, sir. You are the representative of the only remaining heir of the Rennepont family, the Abbé Gabriel de Rennepont?"

"Yes, sir, and here are my papers," replied Rodin.

"To save time," resumed Samuel, "I will, previous to the arrival of the magistrate, go through the inventory of the securities contained in this casket, which I withdrew yesterday from the custody of the Bank of France."

"The securities are there?" cried Rodin, advancing eagerly towards the casket.

"Yes, sir," replied Samuel, "as by the list. Your secretary will call them over, and I will produce each in turn. They can then be replaced in the casket, which I will deliver up to you in presence of the magistrate."

"All this seems perfectly correct," said Rodin.

Samuel delivered the list to Father Caboccini, and, approaching the casket, touched a spring, which was not seen by Rodin. The heavy lid flew open, and, while Father Caboccini read the names of the different securities, Samuel showed them to Rodin, who returned them to the old Jew, after a careful examination. This verification did not last long, for this immense fortune was all comprised, as we already know, in eight government securities, five hundred thousand francs in bank-notes, thirty-five thousand francs in gold, and two hundred and fifty francs in silver—making in all an amount of two hundred and twelve millions, one hnndred and seventy-five thousand francs. When Rodin had counted the last of the five hundred bank-notes, of a thousand francs each, he said, as he returned then to Samuel: "It is quite right. Two hundred and twelve millions, one hundred and seventy-five thousand francs!"

He was no doubt almost choked with joy, for he breathed with difficulty, his eyes closed, and he was obliged to lean upon Father Caboccini's arm, as he said to him in an altered voice: "It is singular. I thought myself proof against all such emotions; but what I feel is extraordinary."

The natural paleness of the Jesuit increased so much, and he seemed so much agitated with convulsive movements, that Father Caboccini exclaimed: "My dear father, collect yourself; do not let success overcome you thus."

Whilst the little one-eyed man was attending to Rodin, Samuel carefully replaced the securities in the iron casket. Thanks to his unconquerable energy, and to the joy he felt

at seeing himself so near the term of his labors, Rodin mastered this attack of weakness, and drawing himself up, calm and proud, he said to Caboccini: "It is nothing. I did not survive the cholera to die of joy on the first of June."

And, though still frightfully pale, the countenance of the Jesuit shone with audacious confidence. But now, when Rodin appeared to be quite recovered, Father Caboccini seemed suddenly transformed. Though short, fat, and one-eyed, his features assumed on the instant so firm, harsh, and commanding an expression, that Rodin recoiled a step as he looked at him. Then Father Caboccini, drawing a paper from his pocket, kissed it respectfully, glanced sternly at Rodin, and read as follows, in a severe and menacing tone:

"'On receipt of the present rescript, the Reverend Father Rodin will deliver up all his powers to the Reverend Father Caboccini, who is alone commissioned, with the Reverend Father d'Aigrigny, to receive the inheritance of the Rennepont family, if, in His eternal justice, the Lord should restore this property, of which our Company has been wronged.

"'Moreover, on receipt of the present rescript, the Reverend Father Rodin, in charge of a person to be named by the Reverend Father Caboccini, shall be conveyed to our house in the Town of Laval, to be kept in strict seclusion in his cell until further orders."

Then Father Caboccini handed the rescript to Rodin, that the latter might read the signature of the General of the Company. Samuel, greatly interested by this scene, drew a few steps nearer, leaving the casket half-open. Suddenly, Rodin burst into a loud laugh—a laugh of joy, contempt and triumph, impossible to describe. Father Caboccini looked at him with angry astonishment; when Rodin, growing still more imperious and haughty, and with an air of more sovereign disdain than ever, pushed aside the paper with the back of his dirty hand, and said: "What is the date of that scribble?"

"The eleventh of May," answered Father Caboccini in amazement.

"Here is a brief, that I received last night from Rome, under date of the eighteenth. It informs me that I am appointed General of the Order. Read!"

Father Caboccini took the paper, read it, and remained thunderstruck. Then, returning it humbly to Rodin, he respectfully bent his knee before him. Thus seemed the ambitious views of Rodin accomplished. In spite of the hatred and suspicion of that party, of which Cardinal Malipieri was the representative and the chief, Rodin, by address

and craft, audacity and persuasion, and in consequence of the high esteem in which his partisans at Rome held his rare capacity, had succeeded in deposing his General, and in procuring his own elevation to that eminent post. Now, according to his calculation, aided by the millions he was about to possess, it would be but one step from that post to the pontifical throne. A mute witness of this scene, Samuel smiled also with an air of triumph, as he closed the casket by means of the spring known only to himself. That metallic sound recalled Rodin from the heights of his mad ambition to the realities of life, and he said to Samuel in a sharp voice: "You have heard? These millions must be delivered to me alone."

He extended his hands eagerly and impatiently towards the casket, as if he would have taken possession of it, before the arrival of the magistrate. Then Samuel in his turn seemed transfigured, and, folding his arms upon his breast, and drawing up his aged form to its full height, he assumed a threatening and imposing air. His eyes flashed with indignation, and he said in a solemn tone: "This fortune—at first the humble remains of the inheritance of the most noble of men, whom the plots of the sons of Loyola drove to suicide—this fortune, which has since become royal in amount, thanks to the sacred probity of three generations of faithful servants—this fortune shall never be the reward of falsehood, hypocrisy and murder. No! the eternal justice of heaven will not allow it."

"Of murder? what do you mean, sir?" asked Rodin, boldly.

Samuel made no answer. He stamped his foot, and extended his arm slowly towards the extremity of the apartment. Then Rodin and Father Caboccini beheld an awful spectacle. The draperies on the wall were drawn aside, as if by an invisible hand. Round a funeral vault, faintly illumined by the bluish light of a silver lamp, six dead bodies were ranged upon black biers, dressed in long black robes. They were: Jacques Rennepont—François Hardy—Rose and Blanche Simon—Adrienne and Djalma. They appeared to be asleep. Their eyelids were closed, their hands crossed over their breasts. Father Caboccini, trembling in every limb, made the sign of the cross, and retreating to the opposite wall, buried his face in his hands. Rodin, on the contrary, with agitated countenance, staring eyes, and hair standing on end, yielding to an invincible attraction, advanced towards those inanimate forms. One would have said that these last of the Renneponts had only just ex-

pired. They seemed to be in the first hour of the eternal sleep.*

"Behold those whom thou hast slain!" cried Samuel, in a voice broken with sobs. "Yea! your detestable plots caused their death—and, as they fell one by one, it was my pious care to obtain possession of their poor remains, that they may all repose in the same sepulchre. Oh!—cursed—cursed—cursed—be thou who hast killed them! But their spoils shall escape thy murderous hands."

Rodin, still drawn forward in spite of himself, had approached the funeral couch of Djalma. Surmounting his first alarm, the Jesuit, to assure himself that he was not the sport of a frightful dream, ventured to touch the hands of the Asiatic—and found that they were damp and pliant, though cold as ice.

The Jesuit drew back in horror. For some seconds, he trembled convulsively. But, his first amazement over, reflection returned, and, with reflection came that invincible energy, that infernal obstinacy of character, that gave him so much power. Steadying himself on his legs, drawing his hand across his brow, raising his head, moistening his lips two or three times before he spoke—for his throat and mouth grew ever drier and hotter, without his being able to explain the cause—he succeeded in giving to his features an imperious and ironical expression, and, turning towards Samuel, who wept in silence, he said to him, in a hoarse, guttural voice: "I need not show you the certificates of their death. There they are in person." And he pointed with his bony hand to the six dead bodies.

At these words of his General, Father Caboccini again made the sign of the cross, as if he had seen a fiend.

"Oh, my God!" cried Samuel; "Thou hast quite abandoned this man. With what a calm look he contemplates his victims!"

"Come, sir!" said Rodin, with a horrid smile; "this is a natural waxwork exhibition, that is all. My calmness proves my innocence—and we had best come at once to business. I have an appointment at two o'clock. So let us carry down this casket."

He advanced towards the marble slab. Seized with indignation and horror, Samuel threw himself before him, and, pressing with all his might on a knob in the lid of the cask-

* Should this appear incredible, we would remind the reader of the marvellous discoveries in the art of embalming—particularly Dr. Ganal's.

et—a knob which yielded to the pressure—he exclaimed: "Since your infernal soul is incapable of remorse, it may perhaps be shaken by disappointed avarice."

"What does he say?" cried Rodin. "What is he doing?"

"Look!" said Samuel, in his turn assuming an air of savage triumph. "I told you, that the spoils of your victims should escape your murderous hands."

Hardly had he uttered these words, before through the open-work of the iron casket rose a light cloud of smoke, and an odor as of burnt paper spread itself through the room. Rodin understood it instantly. "Fire!" he exclaimed, as he rushed forward to seize the casket. It had been made fast to the heavy marble slab.

"Yes, fire," said Samuel. "In a few minutes, of that immense treasure there will remain nothing but ashes. And better so, than that it should belong to you or yours. This treasure is not mine, and it only remains for me to destroy it—since Gabriel de Rennepont will be faithful to the oath he has taken."

"Help! water! water!" cried Rodin, as he covered the casket with his body, trying in vain to extinguish the flames, which, fanned by the current of air, now issued from the thousand apertures in the lid; but soon the intensity of the fire diminished, a few threads of bluish smoke alone mounted upwards—and then, all was extinct.

The work was done! Breathless and faint, Rodin leaned against the marble slab. For the first time in his life, he wept; large tears of rage rolled down his cadaverous cheeks. But suddenly, dreadful pains, at first dull, but gradually augmenting in intensity, seized on him with so much fury, though he employed all his energy to struggle against them, that he fell on his knees, and, pressing his two hands to his chest, murmured with an attempt to smile: "It is nothing. Do not be alarmed. A few spasms—that is all. The treasure is destroyed—but I remain General of the Order. Oh! I suffer. What a furnace!" he added, writhing in agony. "Since I entered this cursed house, I know not what ails me. If—I had not lived on roots—water—bread—which I go myself to buy—I should think—I was poisoned—for I triumph—and Cardinal Malipieri has long arms. Yes—I still triumph—for I will not die—this time no more than the other—I will not die!"

Then, as he stretched out his arms convulsively, he continued: "It is fire that devours my entrails. No doubt, they have tried to poison me. But when? but how?"

After another pause, Rodin again cried out, in a stifled voice: "Help! help me, you that stand looking on—like spectres!—Help me, I say!"

Horror-struck at this dreadful agony, Samuel and Father Caboccini were unable to stir.

"Help!" repeated Rodin, in a tone of strangulation. "This poison is horrible.—But how——" Then, with a terrific cry of rage, as if a sudden idea had struck him, he exclaimed: "Ha! Faringhea—this morning—the holy water—he knows such subtle poisons. Yes—it is he—he had an interview with Malipieri. The demon!—Oh! it was well played. The Borgias are still the same. Oh! it is all over. I die. They will regret me, the fools!—Oh! hell! hell! The Church knows not its loss—but I burn—help!"

They came to his assistance. Quick steps were heard upon the stairs, and Dr. Baleinier, followed by the Princess de Saint-Dizier, appeared at the entrance of the Hall of Mourning. The princess had learned vaguely that morning the death of Father d'Aigrigny, and had come to question Rodin upon the subject. When this woman, entering the room, suddenly saw the frightful spectacle that offered itself to her view—when she saw Rodin writhing in horrible agony, and, further on, by the light of the sepulchral lamp, those six corpses—and, amongst them, her own niece, and the two orphans whom she had sent to meet their death—she stood petrified with horror, and her reason was unable to withstand the shock. She looked slowly round her, and then raised her arms on high, and burst into a wild fit of laughter. She had gone mad! Whilst Dr. Baleinier supported the head of Rodin, who expired in his arms, Faringhea appeared at the door; remaining in the shade, he cast a ferocious glance at the corpse of the Jesuit. "He would have made himself the chief of the Company of Jesus, to destroy it," said he; "with me, the Company of Jesus stands in the place of Bowanee. I have obeyed the cardinal!"

EPILOGUE.

CHAPTER I

FOUR YEARS AFTER.

FOUR years had elapsed, since the events we have just related, when Gabriel de Rennepont wrote the following letter to Abbé Joseph Charpentier, curate of the Parish of Saint-Aubin, a hamlet of Sologne :

"Springwater Farm,
"June 2d, 1836.

" Intending to write to you yesterday, my dear Joseph, I seated myself at the little old black table, that you will remember well. My window looks, you know, upon the farm-yard, and I can see all that takes place there. These are grave preliminaries, my friend, but I am coming to the point. I had just taken my seat at the table, when, looking from the window, this is what I saw. You, my dear Joseph, who can draw so well, should have been there to have sketched the charming scene. The sun was sinking, the sky serene, the air warm and balmy with the breath of the hawthorn, which, flowering by the side of a little rivulet, forms the edge which borders the yard. Under the large pear-tree, close to the wall of the barn, sat upon the stone bench my adopted father, Dagobert, that brave and honest soldier whom you love so much. He appeared thoughtful, his white head was bowed on his bosom ; with absent mind, he patted old Spoil-sport, whose intelligent face was resting on his master's knees. By his side was his wife, my dear adopted mother, occupied with her sewing ; and near them, on a stool, sat Angela, the wife of Agricola, nursing her last-born child, while the gentle Magdalen, with the eldest boy in her lap, was occupied in teaching him the letters of the alphabet. Agricola had just returned from the fields, and was beginning to unyoke his cattle, when, struck, like me, no doubt, with this picture, he stood gazing on it for a moment, with his hand still leaning on the yoke, beneath which bent submissive the broad foreheads of his two large black

oxen. I cannot express to you, my friend, the enchanting repose of this picture, lighted by the last rays of the sun, here and there broken by the thick foliage. What various and touching types! The venerable face of the soldier—the good, loving countenance of my adopted mother—the fresh beauty of Angela, smiling on her little child—the soft melancholy of the hunchback, now and then pressing her lips to the fair, laughing cheek of Agricola's eldest son—and then Agricola himself, in his manly beauty, which seems to reflect so well the valor and honesty of his heart! Oh, my friend! in contemplating this assemblage of good, devoted, noble, and loving beings, so dear to each other, living retired in a little farm of our poor Sologne, my heart rose towards heaven with a feeling of ineffable gratitude. This peace of the family circle—this clear evening, with the perfume of the woods and wild flowers wafted on the breeze—this deep silence, only broken by the murmur of the neighboring rill—all affected me with one of these passing fits of vague and sweet emotion, which one feels but cannot express. You well know it, my friend, who, in your solitary walks, in the midst of your immense plains of flowering heath, surrounded by forests of fir trees, often feel your eyes grow moist, without being able to explain the cause of that sweet melancholy, which I, too, have often felt, during those glorious nights passed in the profound solitudes of America.

"But, alas! a painful incident disturbed the serenity of the picture. Suddenly I heard Dagobert's wife say to him: "My dear—you are weeping!"

"At these words, Agricola, Angela, and Magdalen gathered round the soldier. Anxiety was visible upon every face. Then, as he raised his head abruptly, one could see two large tears trickle down his cheek to his white moustache. "It is nothing, my children," said he, in a voice of emotion; "it is nothing. Only, to-day is the first of June—and this day four years——" He could not complete the sentence; and, as he raised his hands to his eyes, to brush away the tears, we saw that he held between his fingers a little bronze chain, with a medal suspended to it. That is his dearest relic. Four years ago, almost dying with despair at the loss of the two angels, of whom I have so often spoken to you, my friend, he took from the neck of Marshal Simon, brought home dead from a fatal duel, this chain and medal which his children had so long worn. I went down instantly, as you may suppose, to endeavor to soothe the painful remembrances of this excellent man; gradually, he grew

calmer, and the evening was passed in a pious and quiet sadness.

"You cannot imagine, my friend, when I returned to my chamber, what cruel thoughts came to my mind, as I recalled those past events, from which I generally turn away with fear and horror. Then I saw once more the victims of those terrible and mysterious plots, the awful depths of which have never been penetrated, thanks to the deaths of Father d'A. and Father R., and the incurable madness of Madame de St.-D., the three authors or accomplices of the dreadful deeds. The calamities occasioned by them are irreparable; for those who were thus sacrificed to a criminal ambition, would have been the pride of humanity by the good they would have done. Ah, my friend! if you had known those noble hearts; if you had known the projects of splendid charity, formed by that young lady, whose heart was so generous, whose mind so elevated, whose soul so great! On the eve of her death, as a kind of prelude to her magnificent designs, after a conversation, the subject of which I must keep secret, even from you, she put into my hands a considerable sum, saying, with her usual grace and goodness: "I have been threatened with ruin, and it might perhaps come. What I now confide to you will at least be safe—safe for those who suffer. Give much—give freely—make as many happy hearts as you can. My happiness shall have a royal inauguration!" I do not know whether I ever told you, my friend, that, after those fatal events, seeing Dagobert and his wife reduced to misery, poor "Mother Bunch" hardly able to earn a wretched subsistence, Agricola soon to become a father, and myself deprived of my curacy, and suspended by my bishop, for having given religious consolations to a Protestant, and offered up prayers at the tomb of an unfortunate suicide—I considered myself justified in employing a small portion of the sum intrusted to me by Mdile. de Cardoville in the purchase of this farm in Dagobert's name.

"Yes, my friend, such is the origin of my fortune. The farmer to whom these few acres formerly belonged, gave us the rudiments of our agricultural education, and common sense, and the study of a few good practical books, completed it. From an excellent workman, Agricola has become an equally excellent husbandman; I have tried to imitate him, and have put my hand also to the plough: there is no derogation in it, for the labor which provides food for man is thrice hallowed, and it is truly to serve and

glorify God, to cultivate and enrich the earth He has created. Dagobert, when his first grief was a little appeased, seemed to gather new vigor from this healthy life of the fields; and, during his exile in Siberia, he had already learned to till the ground. Finally, my dear adopted mother and sister, and Agricola's good wife, have divided between them the household cares; and God has blessed this little colony of people, who, alas! have been sorely tried by misfortune, and who now only ask of toil and solitude, a quiet, laborious, innocent life, and oblivion of great sorrows. Sometimes, in our winter evenings, you have been able to appreciate the delicate and charming mind of the gentle "Mother Bunch," the rare poetical imagination of Agricola, the tenderness of his mother, the good sense of his father, the exquisite natural grace of Angela. Tell me, my friend, was it possible to unite more elements of domestic happiness? What long evenings have we passed round the fire of crackling wood, reading, or commenting on a few immortal works, which always warm the heart, and enlarge the soul! What sweet talk have we had, prolonged far into the night! And then Agricola's pastorals, and the timid literary confidences of Magdalen! And the fresh, clear voice of Angela, joined to the deep manly tones of Agricola, in songs of simple melody! And the old stories of Dagobert, so energetic and picturesque in their warlike spirit! And the adorable gayety of the children, in their sports with good old Spoil-sport, who rather lends himself to their play than takes part in it—for the faithful, intelligent creature seems always to be looking for somebody, as Dagobert says—and he is right. Yes, the dog also regrets those two angels, of whom he was the devoted guardian!

"Do not think, my friend, that our happiness makes us forgetful. No, no; not a day passes without our repeating, with pious and tender respect, those names so dear to our heart. And these painful memories, hovering forever about us, give to our calm and happy existence that shade of mild seriousness which struck you so much. No doubt, my friend, this kind of life, bounded by the family circle, and not extending beyond, for the happiness or improvement of our brethren, may be set down as selfish; but, alas! we have not the means—and though the poor man always finds a place at our frugal table, and shelter beneath our roof, we must renounce all great projects of fraternal action. The little revenue of our farm just suffices to supply our wants. Alas! when I think over it, notwithstanding a

momentary regret, I cannot blame my resolution to keep faithfully my sacred oath, and to renounce that great inheritance, which, alas! had become immense by the death of my kindred. Yes, I believe I performed a duty, when I begged the guardian of that treasure to reduce it to ashes, rather than let it fall into the hands of people, who would have made an execrable use of it, or to perjure myself by disputing a donation which I had granted freely, voluntarily, sincerely. And yet, when I picture to myself the realization of the magnificent views of my ancestor—an admirable Utopia, only possible with immense resources—and which Mdlle. de Cardoville hoped to carry into execution, with the aid of M. François Hardy, of Prince Djalma, of Marshal Simon and his daughters, and of myself—when I think of the dazzling focus of living forces, which such an association would have been, and of the immense influence it might have had on the happiness of the whole human race—my indignation and horror, as an honest man and a Christian, are excited against that abominable Company, whose black plots nipped in their bud all those great hopes, which promised so much for futurity. What remains now of all these splendid projects? Seven tombs. For my grave also is dug in that mausoleum, which Samuel has erected on the site of the house in the Rue Neuve-Saint-François, and of which he remains the keeper—faithful to the end!

* * * * * * *

"I had written thus far, my friend, when I received your letter. So, after having forbidden you to see me, your bishop now orders that you shall cease to correspond with me. Your touching, painful regrets have deeply moved me, my friend. Often have we talked together of ecclesiastical discipline, and of the absolute power of the bishops over us, the poor working clergy, left to their mercy without aid or remedy. It is painful, but it is the law of the church, my friend, and you have sworn to observe it. Submit as I have submitted. Every engagement is binding upon the man of honor! My poor, dear Joseph! would that you had the compensations which remained to me, after the rupture of ties that I so much value. But I know too well what you must feel—I cannot go on—— I find it impossible to continue this letter, I might be bitter against those whose orders we are bound to respect. Since it must be so, this letter shall be my last. Farewell, my friend! farewell forever. My heart is almost broken.

"GABRIEL DE RENNEPONT."

CHAPTER II.

THE REDEMPTION.

Day was about to dawn. A rosy light, almost imperceptible, began to glimmer in the east; but the stars still shone, sparkling with radiance, upon the azure of the zenith. The birds awoke beneath the fresh foliage of the great woods; and, with isolated warblings, sang the prelude of their morning-concert. A light mist rose from the high grass, bathed in nocturnal dew, while the calm and limpid waters of a vast lake reflected the whitening dawn in their deep, blue mirror. Everything promised one of those warm and joyous days, that belong to the opening of summer.

Half-way up the slope of a hill, facing the east, a tuft of old, moss-grown willows, whose rugged bark disappeared beneath the climbing branches of wild honeysuckle and harebells, formed a natural harbor; and on their gnarled and enormous roots, covered with thick moss, were seated a man and a woman, whose white hair, deep wrinkles, and bending figures, announced extreme old age. And yet this woman had only lately been young and beautiful, with long black hair overshadowing her pale forehead. And yet this man had, a short time ago, been still in the vigor of his age. From the spot where this man and woman were reposing, could be seen the valley, the lake, the woods, and, soaring above the woods, the blue summit of a high mountain, from behind which the sun was about to rise. This picture, half-veiled by the pale transparency of the morning twilight, was pleasing, melancholy, and solemn.

"Oh, my sister!" said the old man to the woman, who was reposing with him beneath the rustic arbor formed by the tuft of willow-trees; "oh, my sister! how many times during the centuries in which the hand of the Lord carried us onward, and, separated from each other, we traversed the world from pole to pole—how many times we have witnessed this awaking of nature with a sentiment of incurable grief! —Alas! it was but another day of wandering—another useless day added to our life, since it brought death no nearer!"

"But now what happiness, oh, my brother! since the Lord has had mercy on us, and, with us, as with all other creatures, every returning day is a step nearer to the grave. Glory to Him! yes, glory!"

"Glory to Him, my sister! for since yesterday, when we again met, I feel that indescribable languor which announces the approach of death."

"Like you, my brother, I feel my strength, already shaken, passing away in a sweet exhaustion. Doubtless, the term of our life approaches. The wrath of the Lord is satisfied."

"Alas, my sister! doubtless also, the last of my doomed race, will, at the same time, complete our redemption by his death; for the will of heaven is manifest, that I can only be pardoned, when the last of my family shall have disappeared from the face of the earth. To him, holiest amongst the holiest—was reserved the favor of accomplishing this end—he who has done so much for the salvation of his brethren!"

"Oh, yes, my brother! he who has suffered so much, and without complaining, drunk to the dregs the bitter cup of woe—he, the minister of the Lord, who has been his Master's image upon earth—he was fitted for the last instrument of this redemption!"

"Yes, for I feel, my sister, that, at this hour, the last of my race, touching victim of slow persecution, is on the point of resigning his angelic soul to God. Thus, even to the end, have I been fatal to my doomed family. Lord, if Thy mercy is great, Thy anger is great likewise!"

"Courage and hope, my brother! Think how after the expiration cometh pardon, and pardon is followed by a blessing. The Lord punished, in you and your posterity, the artisan rendered wicked by misfortune and injustice. He said to you: 'Go on! without truce or rest—and your labor shall be vain—and every evening, throwing yourself on the hard ground, you shall be no nearer to the end of your eternal course!'—And so, for centuries, men without pity have said to the artisan: 'Work! work! work! without truce or rest—and your labor shall be fruitful for all others, but fruitless for yourself—and every evening, throwing yourself on the hard ground, you shall be no nearer to happiness and repose; and your wages shall only suffice to keep you alive in pain, privation, and poverty!'"

"Alas! alas! will it be always thus?"

"No, no, my brother! and instead of weeping over your lost race, rejoice for them—since their death was needed for your redemption, and in redeeming you, heaven will redeem the artisan, cursed and feared by those who have laid on him the iron yoke. Yes, my brother! the time draweth nigh—heaven's mercy will not stop with us alone. Yes, I tell you: in us will be rescued both the WOMAN and the SLAVE of these

modern ages. The trial has been hard, brother; it has lasted throughout eighteen centuries; but it will last no longer. Look, my brother! see that rosy light, there in the east, gradually spreading over the firmament! Thus will rise the sun of the new emancipation—peaceful, holy, great, salutary, fruitful, filling the world with light and vivifying heat, like the day-star that will soon appear in heaven!"

"Yes, yes, my sister! I feel it. Your words are prophetic. We shall close our heavy eyes just as we see the aurora of the day of deliverance—a fair, a splendid day, like that which is about to dawn. Henceforth I will only shed tears of pride and glory for those of my race, who have died the martyrs of humanity, sacrificed by humanity's eternal enemies—for the true ancestors of the sacrilegious wretches, who blaspheme the name of Jesus by giving it to their Company, were the false Scribes and Pharisees, whom the Saviour cursed!—Yes! glory to the descendants of my family, who have been the last martyrs offered up by the accomplices of all slavery and all despotism, the pitiless enemies of those who wish to think, and not to suffer in silence—of those that would feign enjoy, as children of heaven, the gifts which the Creator has bestowed upon all the human family. Yes, the day approaches—the end of the reign of our modern Pharisees—the false priests, who lend their sacrilegious aid to the merciless selfishness of the strong against the weak, by daring to maintain in the face of the exhaustless treasures of the creation, that God has made man for tears, and sorrow, and suffering—the false priests, who are the agents of all oppression, and would bow to the earth, in brutish and hopeless humiliation, the brow of every creature. No, no! let man lift his head proudly! God made him to be noble and intelligent, free and happy."

"Oh, my brother! your words also are prophetic. Yes, yes! the dawn of that bright day approaches, even as the dawn of the natural day which, by the mercy of God, will be our last on earth."

"The last, my sister; for a strange weakness creeps over me, all matter seems dissolving in me, and my soul aspires to mount to heaven."

"Mine eyes are growing dim, brother; I can scarcely see that light in the east, which lately appeared so red."

"Sister! it is through a confused vapor that I now see the valley—the lake—the woods. My strength fails me."

"Blessed be God, brother! the moment of eternal rest is at hand."

"Yes, it comes, my sister! the sweetness of the everlasting sleep takes possession of my senses."

"Oh, happiness! I am dying."

"These eyes are closing, sister!"

"We are then forgiven!"

"Forgiven!"

"Oh, my brother! may this Divine redemption extend to all those who suffer upon the earth!"

"Die in peace, my sister! The great day has dawned—the sun is rising—behold!"

"Blessed be God!"

"Blessed be God!"

* * * * * * *

And at the moment when those two voices ceased forever, the sun rose radiant and dazzling, and deluged the valley with its beams.

To M. C—— P——.

To you, my friend, I dedicated this book. To inscribe it with your name, was to assume an engagement that, in the absence of talent, it should be at least conscientious, sincere, and of a salutary influence, however limited. My object is attained. Some select hearts, like yours, my friend, have put into practice the legitimate association of labor, capital, and intelligence, and have already granted to their workmen a proportionate share in the profits of their industry. Others have laid the foundations of Common Dwelling-houses, and one of the chief capitalists of Hamburg has favored me with his views respecting an establishment of this kind, on the most gigantic scale.

As for the dispersion of the members of the Company of Jesus, I have taken less part in it than other enemies of the detestable doctrines of Loyola, whose influence and authority were far greater than mine.

Adieu, my friend. I could have wished this work more worthy of you; but you are indulgent, and will at least give me credit for the intentions which dictated it.

Believe me,

Yours truly,

EUGENE SUE.

Paris, 25*th August*, 1845.

THE END.